Hafa Adai!

TSL Foundation donates piano to Mt. Carmel Cathedral. PAGE 3
Disability Network Partners name Tinian champs of the year. PAGE 7

75¢

# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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# Near-drowning ends in death

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Korean woman who nearly drowned last Thursday, March 25, passed away last Sunday morning after three days of unconsciousness at the Intensive Care Unit of the Commonwealth Health Center.

It was learned that a memorial service was supposed to be held at the Korean Community Center in San Antonio at 6pm last night.

It was learned that the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services personnel rushed the Korean woman to

See DEATH on Page 4

**WOMEN IN MUSIC**
A diverse slice of the CNMI community representing various cultures—Chamorro, Carolinian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Filipino, Chuukese, Japanese, Korean, Kosraean, Marshallese, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Russian, Samoan, Thai, Tongan, American, and Yapese—attend the CNMI Recognition of Women in Music event last Friday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

NEIL FAMA

Story on Page 4

## Cui ordered to save cell phone data

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has ordered Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd. chair Cui Li Jie to make a forensic copy of her cell phone data.

Cui

Last Friday, March 26, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Ramona Manglona ordered Cui to make forensic evidence of any and all cell phones that

See CUI on Page 4

### AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, March 29, 2021

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 7,796 | 8 | 7,804 |
| Recovered | 7,635 | 2 | 7,637 |
| Active | 25 | 8 | 33 |
| Deaths | 134 | 0 | 134 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 140,024 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 159 | 0 | 159 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 123 | 0 | 123 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 36 | 0 | 36 |
| Deaths | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 26,131* |
| Days since last community transmission | | | 13 |

**VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI**

| Saipan: | Tinian: | Rota: |
|---|---|---|
| Dose 1: 14,203 | Dose 1: 913 | Dose 1: 944 |
| Dose 2: 10,424 | Dose 2: 517 | Dose 2: 735 |

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

### COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

**LEGEND:**
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

*Source: Office of the Governor*

## 'Vaccination mandate is guided by OAG'

By JUSITNE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The idea to make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for Executive Branch employees was not made in a vacuum, but arose from the guidance of the Office of the Attorney General, and that guidance will continue to be followed, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Speaking at his regular radio news briefing last Friday, Torres said the draft directive to make the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for Executive Branch employees was

See OAG on Page 4

## Apatang may scale down LibDay fete

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, who was earlier gung ho about having a full-blown but controlled Liberation Day celebration this year, may have had

Apatang

a change of heart since the recent flare-up of community cases of COVID-19.

The original idea was to have five consecutive eve-

See APATANG on Page 4

## INSIDE

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ECO-PRO Sanitizing & Disinfecting Company joins the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**ASIA**
Thailand braces for a possible influx of more ethnic Karen villagers fleeing Myanmar.

PAGE 13

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

# Local

## House OKs reverting 10% of excise tax to solid waste revolving fund

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously passed last week a bill that will allocate 10% of the excise tax to the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund. The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

House Bill 22-46 HS1, authored by vice speaker Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan), will amend the Commonwealth Code to allocate not just 7% of the excise tax but a full 10% to the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund.

Under the bill, 10% of excise taxes collected under the statute shall be reserved for the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund of the Solid Waste Management Program, to be expended by the Department of Public Works secretary.

Attao

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune* last Thursday, Attao said his legislation reverts the share of the Solid Waste Management Revolving Fund in excise taxes back to 10%, as originally intended under Public Law 13-42. Back then, during the 13th Legislature, Public Law 13-42 created a 0.42 cent ad valorem excise tax. Attao said 10% of that money was supposed to be in a revolving account for Solid Waste Management.

He said that when the Puerto Rico dump was being closed out by the Tenorio-Pepero administration and completed by the Babauta-Benavente administration, one of the requirements was a funding source if the landfill were to be closed and a new one opened up. That was also a requirement in a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant.

"Those monies are supposed to address the funding for that [opening a new landfill]. And this is a requirement that was put into place with EPA, and the transition from the Puerto Rico dump to the Marpi landfill," Attao said.

Unfortunately, he said, under Public Law 18-64, the CNMI government took 3% of the 10% and gave it to non-governmental organizations.

"Unfortunately, the interpretation of that was misconstrued and [the Solid Waste Management Fund] is only getting, receiving 4%," he said.

"Instead of 10%, it went down to 7%, then they are splitting this 7% to 3%-4%," he said.

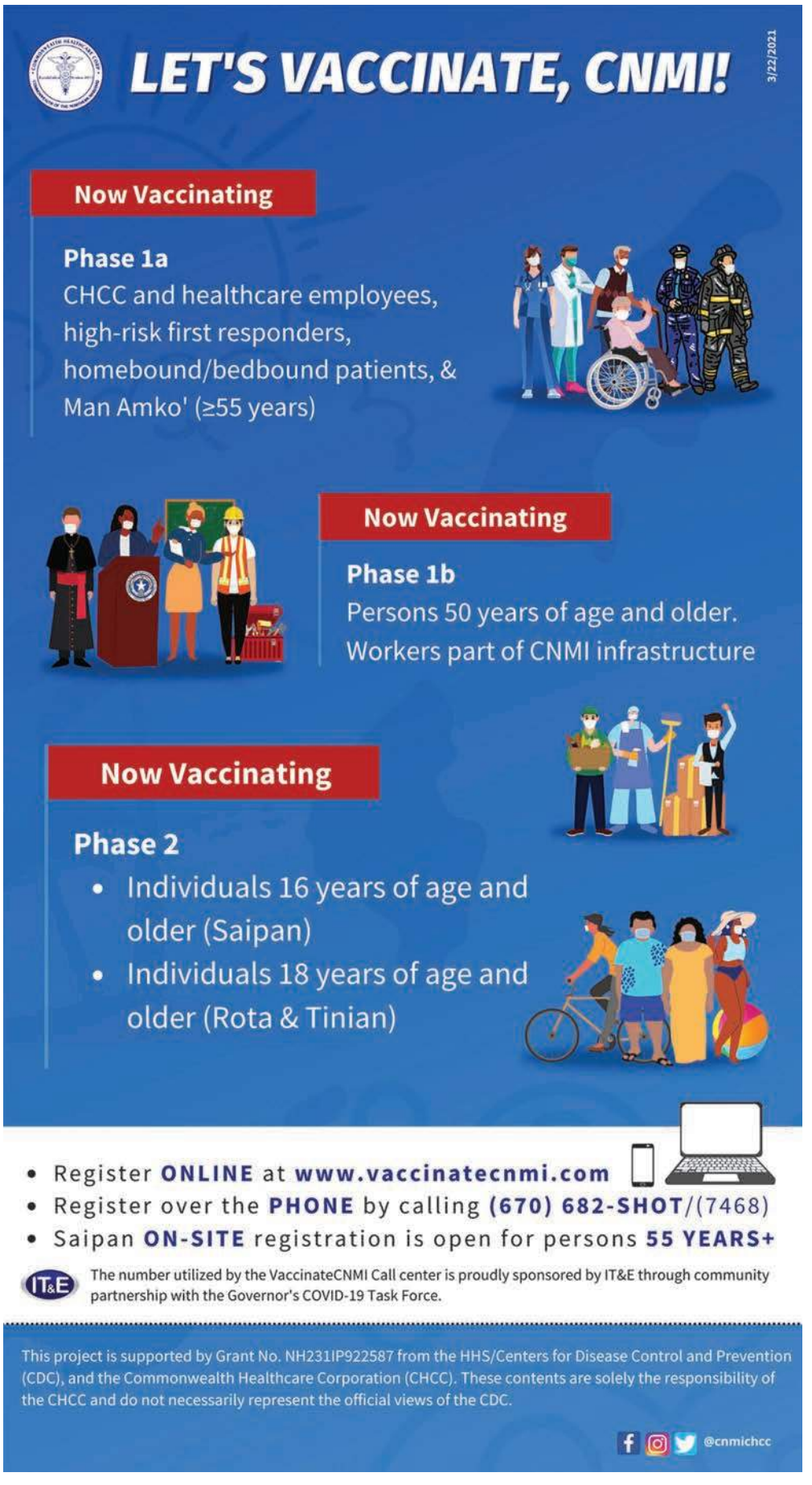
Attao said his bill will revert back the share of the Solid Waste Management Fund in excise taxes to 10%.

## Customs to host a stakeholder meeting on excise tax payments

The CNMI Division of Customs will hold an informational meeting on April 1, 2021, with importers, taxpayers and their agents to explain the new the law requiring the payment of excise tax prior to the release of cargo.

Public Law 21-42 mandates excise tax payments shall be made upon entry and prior to the release of goods, commodities, resources or merchandise. Importers may apply for a 30-day grace period provided the business meets all the required criteria: a CNMI business license for at least two years; a valid tax identification number; a minimum of one-year compliance with Customs import laws and regulations; and obtain a tax clearance from the Division of Revenue & Taxation for a two-year period.

The Q&A meeting will be on Thursday, April 1, 2021. from 9:30am to 11am at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Only 50 importers or businesses are allowed inside the facility. All attendees must pre-register by calling 664-1610 or complete the RSVP form https://forms.gle/oap3y-QBZzerf1qYA6. ***(PR)***


LET'S VACCINATE, CNMI!
3/22/2021
Now Vaccinating
Phase 1a
CHCC and healthcare employees,
high-risk first responders,
homebound/bedbound patients, &
Man Amko' (≥55 years)
Now Vaccinating
Phase 1b
Persons 50 years of age and older.
Workers part of CNMI infrastructure
Now Vaccinating
Phase 2
• Individuals 16 years of age and older (Saipan)
• Individuals 18 years of age and older (Rota & Tinian)
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
• Saipan ON-SITE registration is open for persons 55 YEARS+
IT&E
The number utilized by the VaccinateCNMI Call center is proudly sponsored by IT&E through community partnership with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force.
This project is supported by Grant No. NH231IP922587 from the HHS/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). These contents are solely the responsibility of the CHCC and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.
@cnmichcc

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
**Office of the Secretary of Public Works**
2nd floor-Oleai Joeten Commercial Center
Saipan, MP 96950

**NOTICE TO ADJACENT LANDOWNERS ALONG WINDWARD/CHALAN KALABERA, ROUTE 36**

| | |
|---|---|
| CRM APPLICATION NO: | SMS-2021-015 |
| PROJECT: | ROUTE 36 (WINDWARD-CHALAN KALABERA) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT |
| APPLICANT: | DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW) |

The Department of Public Works (DPW), in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHA) is proposing to construct road improvements along Route 36 Windward-Chalan Kalabera Road on the northeastern coast of Saipan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The Route 36 Windward-Chalan Kalabera between the Kingfisher Golf Course and Bird Island Lookout is a discontinuous rough coral road in various states of deterioration and lacking connectivity between the two locations. The purpose of the Route 36 Improvement Project is to widen, grade, and pave approximately 3.64 miles of existing road and to replace two drainage crossings at Unai Fanhang and Unai Nanasu by creating a continuous roadway connecting the Talofofo sector with the Marpi sector of Route 36. Restoring connectivity along Route 36 would complete a coastal transportation loop around the island. Benefits of improved connectivity are expected to include (1) improved transportation options during emergencies, (2) improve vehicular access to the northeaster portion of the island, (3) reduce travel times to reach the norther end of the island and the Marpi Landfill from Talofofo, and (4) reduce traffic volumes on arterial Routes 30 and 31.

The public hearing for this project is scheduled to take place on **Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 5:00PM at the BECQ 2nd Floor Main Conference Room** on Middle Road in Lower Gualo, Saipan. Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Google Meet (https://meet.google.com/gsm-zurs-kca) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM Office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance. Google Meet access code may change. Please call DCRM for an update.

Written comments can be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, sent by fax to 664-8315, or emailed to permitting@dcrm.gov.mp. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Route 36 Road Improvement project.

/s/ JAMES A. ADA
Secretary
Department of Public Works

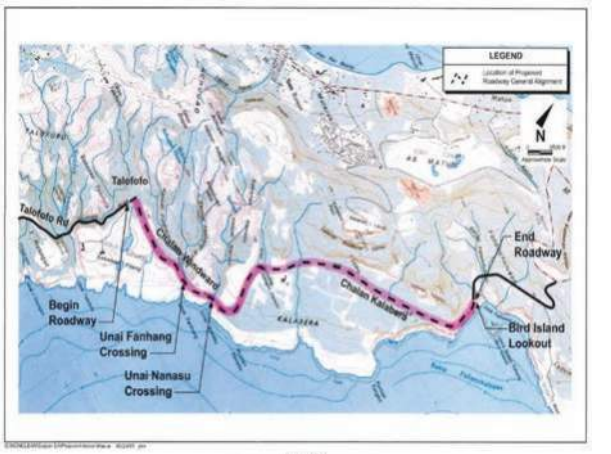


Figure 2-2
Proposed Roadway General Alignment
Saipan, CNMI

PROPOSED ROUTE 36 (WINDWARD/CHALAN KALABERA) IMPROVEMENTS
Total Length = 3.64 miles

Left photo shows, from left, Rev. Fr. Jason Granado, pianist Franco Mendoza, Bishop Ryan Jimenez, Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, Shepherd Choir's Rose Soledad, and TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan posing with the grand piano that the foundation donated to Mt. Carmel Cathedral last Wednesday. Right photo shows the piano being played during the Palm Sunday Mass.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

# TSL Foundation donates piano to Mt. Carmel Cathedral

The Mt. Carmel Cathedral had its 30-plus-years-old piano replaced with a new one, courtesy of a donation from the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan and TSL Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino turned over the Yamaha grand piano to Bishop Ryan Jimenez, Rev. Fr. Jason Granado, Diocesan Finance Council and Shepherd's Choir member Rose Soledad, and pianist Franco Mendoza last Wednesday.

"The piano has been on our wish list for the past several years and we would like to thank the Tan Siu Lin Foundation for granting that wish. The TSL Foundation and TanHoldings have been very supportive of our activities and projects and we hope to continue our partnership as we work together in providing services to our community," Jimenez said.

The cathedral's choir used the new piano last weekend during the Palm Sunday Mass and will utilize the musical instrument in other activities at the church. Jimenez said the piano will not only benefit the cathedral's choir, but other organizations as well. He said Mt. Carmel School and Saipan Southern High School bands used to practice and perform at the cathedral and utilized the old baby piano.

"We will share this to student bands and other organizations that will have their activities at the cathedral," Jimenez said. ***(PR)***

# CHCC adds 4 vaccination teams; works with IT&E on call center

**By JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is enhancing its COVID-19 operations by implementing a new vaccination operating procedure that will beef up the CNMI's vaccination efforts and tying up with IT&E on a new call center.

CHCC public information officer Lee Tenorio said in a statement yesterday that CHCC has added one more vaccination tent at the Medical Care and Treatment Site at the Commonwealth Health Center. That new tent has four more vaccination teams. That means there are now a total of eight vaccination teams.at the MCATS to ensure the surge in demand is met.

Tenorio said the tents are meant for efficient and safe movement within the Medical Care and Treatment Site at the upper CHCC parking lot. To get to the vaccination tents, an individual will enter through the northern entrance, progress throughout the process southward, then exit out of the southern exit.

As for the partnership with IT&E, Tenorio said the new call center will to act as "a one-stop shop" for all individuals interested in availing of the COVID-19 vaccination. The new call center, which is located near the IT&E's Chalan Laulau customer service center, has 15 agents and four management personnel.

"CHCC entered this partnership with IT&E to leverage the telecommunications company's expertise with operating call centers," said Tenorio. He added that the goal of the partnership is to efficiently register people for vaccinations and provide COVID-19 vaccine information.

Tenorio encourages those who are interested to register online at https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com or call the vaccinate CNMI call center at (670) 682- SHOT (7468).

SIGN UP
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SHOP
Get up to
$50 Amazon.com Gift Card
+ up to 500 Bonus
PACIFICPOINTS
amazon
when you choose from
select Postpaid Plans!
$80 UNLIMITED Plan
$50 10GB Data Plan
ite.net itecnmi itecnmi
Terms and conditions apply. Offer available from 03/01/21 - 03/31/21 or while supplies last. $50 Amazon claim code & 500 PACIFICPOINTS available only with $80 Unlimited Plan. $25 Amazon claim code & 500 PACIFICPOINTS available only with $50 10GB Data Plan. 24-month contract required. Amazon claim code cannot be substituted for cash or other items. Standard credit policy applies. Visit ite.net or any IT&E store for details.
Earn 500 PACIFICPOINTS
IT&E

# CNMI Women's Month recognizes women in music

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, front, second from right, and first Lady Diann Torres, front, third from right, are joined by guests and honorees at the Marianas Women in Music and International Diversity last Friday, March 26, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. NEIL FAMA

The Marianas Women in Music and International Diversity celebration last Friday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe honored 30 women in music as part of the celebration of March as CNMI Women's Month.

The 30 women in music who were honored included Alexandra Marino, Amber Mendiola, Arriane Antonio, Atsuko Kada Eck, Chrystal Marino, Darlene Aldan, Ellena Sutton, Emerenciana "Emi" Peter-Palican, Emily Jones, Franvina R. Sos, Immaculada Melita Olopai Pialur, Joannie LouEm Seman Laniyo, Jobelle Yumul Tabuena, Kiki Seman, Laurina Sebaklim, Loretta Kaainoa Deleon Guerrero, Magdalena "Maggie" Naputi Bell, Malua Luke Peter Hosono, Margaret DelaCruz, Margarita Tenorio Cabrera, Maria Angelica W. Iginoef-Mangarero, Nina Aldan, Rhe'ann Manibusan Tudela, Ro'ana Manibusan Tudela, Ruby Jean Moses, Ruslyn Carmen Billy Saito, Sheelane Santos, Stacy Carmelita Sablan Kaipat, Tiana Tudela Reyes, and Visitacion Saures Fitial.

The event was also attended by representatives from the Chamorro, Carolinian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Chuuk, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Kosraean, Marshallese, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Russian, Samoan, Thai, Tongan, American, and Yapese communities.

The event was organized by the CNMI Women's Affairs Office, in cooperation with first lady Diann Torres and her Lady Diann Torres Foundation, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' wife, Wella, and the offices of the Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

Others who graced the event was 2021 Miss Marianas Savannah Lyn Relox Delos Santos, while Frances Sablan was the mistress of ceremony. Emi-Palican, Stacy Kaipat, and Ellen Stutton provided entertainment and closed the event.

According to Delos Santos, first lady Diann Torres and Wella Palacios began recognizing CNMI women two years ago as part of the celebration of Women's Month. At that time, they presented recognition awards to over 150 women on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota with the theme "breaking the glass ceiling," awarding women in male-dominated positions such as policewomen, custom inspectors, and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. linewomen in the CNMI.

Last year, 13 women were honored for surviving obstacles such as toxic relationships, being a single mother, losing a loved one, or a job, yet moving mountains to sustain their families.

In early February this year, they sent out a call for nominations for women in music.

"A woman is anyone who is a singer a composer instrumental performer and music educator with a passion to share talent, and volunteer some of their time to the community. We are happy to announce 30 of those talented women of the CNMI tonight," Delos Santos said.

Partners and sponsors of the event included Pacifica Insurance, Bridge Capital, IT&E, Marianas Visitors Authority, Hanna, Mariana Global, Friends of Japan Council, MARPAC, and Bank of Guam.

The Recognition of Women in Music event was livestreamed in partnership with Northern Marianas College because of limited capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## APATANG

*From Page 1*

nings of activities at the Garapan Fishing Base this July and a full-day celebration on July 4 itself, or Liberation Day, but in a follow-up yesterday at Apatang's office, it was learned that his office is now unsure about carrying on with the full-blown event due to the recent cluster of positive cases in the community.

According to Apatang's office secretary, Youki C. Kishimoto, Apatang is currently awaiting a response from the COVID-19 Task Force, and will provide and update everyone once they have discussed any further plans going forward.

The Liberation Day festivity is traditionally a nine-day affair but last year's event became a one-day very limited on-the-ground celebration due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier, in a letter to COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña, Apatang pushed for five evenings of activities at the Garapan Fishing Base and a full-day celebration on July 4 itself.

However, due to the recent community cases that were identified in the following days after he issued his request, Apatang is now weighing whether the event should go on at all.

The CNMI saw its first local transmission of COVID-19 in 204 days last March 12 when a front-liner at the Kanoa Resort Alternate Care Center tested positive for the coronavirus. Contract tracing yielded 10 more positive cases after 99 close contacts emanating from case No. 147 were quarantined.

## CUI

*From Page 1*

she used in 2020. Manglona said this includes all data from her WeChat account, email accounts, messaging accounts, or other electronically stored information.

Manglona also ordered Cui's lawyer, Juan T. Lizama, to file a certificate with the court that describes the search for any and all ESI data and details of ESI data that exists. ESI, or electronically stored information, refers to any type of information that is stored in digital form, and requires a computer or cellphone to access.

Additionally, Manglona said that Lizama has to declare that any and all forensic copy of any cellphones, including WeChat data, has been made and that all other ESI data has been preserved.

In granting a motion made by seven construction workers that are suing IPI, Manglona allowed the plaintiffs to have a consultant to verify that any ESI data, including the contents of the phone, were adequately preserved and that no data, particularly WeChat messages, was deleted.

Cui was also ordered by the court to retain the copies of any ESI data in Lizama's possession until the court orders differently.

Manglona said the court deemed the plaintiffs' motion is supported by many referenced to the record in not only this case but other cases against IPI.

The seven former workers, through lawyer Aaron Halegua, first filed a motion in the District Court to save evidence of Cui's phone data last March 2.

Halegua said the seven workers believe that data in Cui's phone will help get information that will be useful to their case.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the seven plaintiffs are Tianming Wang, who is seeking $1,025,057 in total compensatory damages; Dong Han, $565,203; Liangcai Sun, $474,244; Yongjun Meng, $416,450; Quingchun Xu, $460,467; Youli Wang, $492,946; and Xiyang Du, $429,167.

In their petition in July 2, 2020, Halegua and Bruce Berline, another counsel for the plaintiffs, said Wang suffered a burnt leg, Han had a crushed finger, Sun had a severed finger, Meng had a burnt hand and leg, Xu had an inverted ankle, Youli Wang had a fractured finger, and Du had a crushed finger.

## OAG

*From Page 1*

first sent for approval to the OAG, and it was the OAG's opinion that ended up being the guidance behind the directive.

"Nothing that we're doing is 'just because the governor said so.' It is a guidance that we follow from the Attorney General's Office, and when we talk about the safety of our community, it is imperative that that is our paramount responsibility," said Torres.

This comes soon after 11 employees at the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services refused to be vaccinated, citing unknown health risks of the vaccine and insisting that they should be given the option to say no. It was learned that the 11 firefighters have been placed on administrative leave with pay.

Torres pointed out that first responders—which include firefighters—have an obligation to protect not only do each other but also the community. "You know, when you look at it, when you call 911, who do you want to come to save your mom, your daughter, your son, your grandma, your grandpa? A firefighter or first responder who is vaccinated, or the first responder that refuses to be vaccinated? Those are the questions that we ask ourselves," said Torres.

Torres said his directive is not meant to target anyone; it's a directive for everyone. He said employees have a right to refuse to be vaccinated if they have a medical condition that prevents them from being vaccinated or if it will run counter to their religious beliefs.

"But to just arbitrarily say I don't want to do either of those.…Again, we're following through the directive at the guidance of the attorney general," said Torres.

Torres directed all Executive Branch employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 as a means to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 last Feb. 18.

## DEATH

*From Page 1*

the hospital last Thursday morning after she was found by other swimmers face down in the water near the World War II tank at the Guma Sakman beach in Susupe.

According to sources, the woman, who was 56 years old, was supposed to attend a swimming class but the instructor reportedly did not come, so she, together with the other members of the class, went swimming on their own.

When *Saipan Tribune* tried to follow up on this incident at CHC last Thursday at 8pm, it was learned that the woman was still in the ICU but reportedly with no brain activity.

Last Thursday, Department of Public Safety public information officer Dre Pangelinan said the woman had a pulse when she was rushed to the hospital.

It was not immediately learned why DPS has not issued any official statement or report about the incident four days after.

# Illegal pharmaceuticals are seized on Saipan

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Photo shows the illegal prescription pharmaceuticals that were seized on Saipan.

Three business establishments—two retailers and one wholesaler—have been found dispensing illegal prescription pharmaceuticals, according to a statement yesterday from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

According to the statement, the Department of Commerce's Division of Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Control discovered the illegal prescription pharmaceuticals during a routine inspection of a retail establishment last March 18. ABTC immediately reported the matter to CHCC's Environmental Health Disease Prevention the same day. EHDP inspectors and CHCC pharmacy examiners then identified and authenticated nine boxes of prescription antibiotics.

Subsequent inspections were conducted on March 19, which identified more establishments involved in dispensing illegal pharmaceuticals, and yielded 875 capsules of amoxicillin and 184 capsules of ibuprofen.

Both antibiotics require a physician and a pharmacist to order and dispense accordingly.

The investigation is ongoing. The CHCC statement did not identify the affected retailers and wholesaler.

Pursuant to Public Law 12-40, Article 3, Subsection 307, no drugs are to be sold unless its batch is safely indicated. Antibiotics are prescribed medication in the CNMI.

Misuse of antibiotic medication may lead to antibiotic resistance in any individual. According to the World Health Organization, antibiotic resistance is putting the achievements of modern medicine at risk. Organ transplantations, chemotherapy, and surgeries such as Caesarean sections become much more dangerous without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections. ***(PR)***

## Portal opens for 3rd stimulus checks

The Department of Finance's Division of Revenue & Taxation announced yesterday that the CNMI Stimulus Portal is available once again on the Department of Finance website, www.dof.gov.mp.

Taxpayers who have successfully received a direct deposit on the second stimulus check do not have to use the portal to resubmit bank information. Valid bank ACH information from the second stimulus will be used for the third round of payments. All invalid bank account information, including error deposits, have been removed from our database. Taxpayers who wish to resubmit or update their bank information may use the portal to provide new valid routing and account numbers.

The portal will only accept local bank information. See acceptable bank and routing information below:

| Bank Name | Routing Number |
|---|---|
| Bank of Guam | 121405115 |
| Bank of Hawaii | 121405018 |
| Bank of Saipan | 121403078 |
| BankPacific | 321470364 |
| City Trust Bank | 121403049 |
| First Hawaiian Bank | 121403065 |

## Deadline to submit Form SF-200

The Settlement Fund is requesting all members to submit their 2020 Annuity Recipient Information Update form (Form SF-200). The form can be obtained online or at the Settlement Fund office. You must attach the following documents to the Form SF-200:

A copy of a valid photo identification, such as a driver's license, passport, or other ID issued within the past five years;

If you are a retiree, a certified copy of a divorce decree and final judgment, adoption decree, or other certified orders if none on file; and

If you are a disability annuitant or a surviving spouse, a copy of the 2019 Income Tax Return is required; and for surviving spouses not required to file a tax return, you must submit a letter of justification regarding the non-filing and Affidavit of Surviving Spouse (Form SF-8).

All forms are available for download at https://www.nmisf.com/forms-2/ and at the Settlement Fund office on Capital Hill.

The final deadline to submit the 2020 form and accompanying documents is April 15, 2021. Failure to comply, including failure to provide complete information or documents, will result in a suspension of benefit payments until such time that a member is in full compliance.

Forms and accompanying documents may be submitted by: (1) email to info@nmisf.com; (2) facsimile to (670) 664-8080; or (3) hand delivery to the Settlement Fund, Isa Drive, Capital Hill. Contact the Settlement Fund at (670) 322-3863 to verify whether you are in compliance. ***(PR)***

# TSLF donates $2K to NMC

As part of its mission to support workforce development in the CNMI, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation recently donated $2,000 to the Northern Marianas College.

The donation was made in support of the NMC Foundation's 16th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Tournament, which was held last week on March 20, 2021, at LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort's East Course.

"We support the college in its efforts to enhance its programs and services for students who are working to improve their lives through education," said Jerry Tan, CEO for Tan-Holdings. "We are proud to assist them in their efforts."

"The success of NMC's golf tournaments, including this year's, is largely due to the generosity and involvement of organizations like Tan Siu Lin Foundation and the Tan Holdings Company," said NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico. "We are grateful for the company's involvement again this year."

The NMC Foundation 16th annual open golf tournament featured hole-in-one prizes from McDonald's of Saipan, Pacifica Insurance, Joeten Motors, and Triple J Motors. Major sponsors for this year's tournament include Bank of Guam, Blackwood Furniture, Dial Rent-to-Own, Express Financial, IT&E, Island Training Solutions, J.C.T Enterprises, Inc., KZMI FM, LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort, Marianas Geotech Services, Marianas Insurance Company, Power 99, Saipan Computer Services, and T Galleria.

The college is asking companies, organizations, or individuals who are interested in donating cash or education tax credit to help support the CNMI's postsecondary institution. For more information on how to become a sponsor, call 237-6780. ***(PR)***

**CAMPUS VISIT** NMC

Members of the CNMI House of Representatives' Education Committee, chaired by Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan), third from right, recently visited Northern Marianas College and met with NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico, rightmost, and members of NMC's leadership team. The visit included a tour of the different sites of where new buildings will be constructed. The campus visit included a tour of recently-renovated spaces and the Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Service agricultural experiment station in As Perdido. In photo with Eliptico and Staffler are Reps. Ed Propst, Donald Manglona, Richard Lizama, and NMC interim vice president for Learning and Student Success Charlotte Cepeda.


**Bank of Hawaii Corporation**

and Subsidiaries

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION**

At the Close of Business December 31, 2020 (dollars in thousands)

| ASSETS | | LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interest-Bearing Deposits in Other Banks | $ 1,646 | Deposits | $18,211,621 |
| Investment Securities | 7,054,416 | Securities Sold Under Agreements to Repurchase | 600,590 |
| Funds Sold | 333,022 | Operating Lease Liabilities | 107,412 |
| Loans Held for Sale | 82,565 | Retirement Benefits Payable | 51,197 |
| Loans and Leases | 11,940,020 | Accrued Interest Payable | 5,117 |
| Allowance for Credit Losses | (216,252) | Taxes Payable | 2,463 |
| Net Loans and Leases | 11,723,768 | Other Liabilities | 190,263 |
| | | Other Debt | 60,481 |
| TOTAL EARNING ASSETS | 19,195,417 | TOTAL LIABILITIES | 19,229,144 |
| Cash and Due From Banks | 279,420 | | |
| Premises and Equipment, Net | 199,695 | Shareholders' Equity | |
| Operating Lease Right-of-Use Assets | 99,542 | Common Stock | 580 |
| Accrued Interest Receivable | 49,303 | Capital Surplus | 591,360 |
| Foreclosed Real Estate | 2,332 | Accumulated Other Comprehensive Income | 7,822 |
| Mortgage Servicing Rights | 19,652 | Retained Earnings | 1,811,979 |
| Goodwill | 31,517 | Treasury Stock, at Cost | (1,037,234) |
| Bank-Owned Life Insurance | 291,480 | | |
| Other Assets | 435,293 | TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY | 1,374,507 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | $20,603,651 | TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY | $20,603,651 |

**BANK OF HAWAII - SAIPAN**

**STATEMENT OF CONDITION**

At the Close of Business December 31, 2020 (dollars in thousands)

| ASSETS | | LIABILITIES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | $ 2,097 | Deposits | $ 176,537 |
| Loans | 38,500 | Operating Lease Liabilities | 405 |
| Allowance for Credit Losses | (1,890) | Accrued Interest Payable | 120 |
| Net Loans | 36,610 | Other Liabilities | 26 |
| Operating Lease Right-of-Use Assets | 405 | | |
| Accrued Interest Receivable | 188 | TOTAL LIABILITIES | $ 177,088 |
| Due from Head Office | 136,316 | | |
| Premises and Equipment, Net | 521 | | |
| Other Assets | 951 | | |
| TOTAL ASSETS | $ 177,088 | | |

The audit reports of Bank of Hawaii Corporation and Bank of Hawaii - Saipan Branches are available for public review at the Office of the Director of Banking, Department of Commerce, Capital Hill, Saipan.

MEMBER FDIC


# Free federal contracting webinars

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars in April. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ **April 1 – DUNS & SAM** – The Guam Buildup is accelerating. Now is the time to branch into federal contracting. To sell your product or service to the federal government, you need to get a DUNS number and register in the System for Award Management. These registrations pose unique challenges to Guam-based businesses. Step-by-step instructions will be given in this webinar.

■ **April 8 – Federal contract opportunities** – The federal government lists their opportunities at Beta.sam.gov. We will show you how to set up an account and how to use the search filters to ensure you do not miss any opportunities.

Register on our website, http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

****VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS NOW AVAILABLE****

**For Veterans Residing in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands**

**How do I make an appointment?**

- Email the Guam Benefits Office at: pctc.vbahon@va.gov
- Call the Guam Benefits Office and leave a message:(671) 489-3793

Include the following:
- Your email and phone number
- First and Last Name
- Reason for Contact

**(For security reasons, DO NOT include your social security number in the email/phone call)**

**What happens next?**

A Benefits Counselor will contact you within 2-hours of leaving a message.

If your message is received after 2:30pm, or on a holiday, or on a weekend, you will be notified the next business day of your scheduled interview date/time.

In all cases, a confirmation telephone call or email will be sent to the customer.

Appointment Days/Times: Monday through Friday, 8am to 3:30pm

Benefits Counselors will be available to address Non-Health Care related inquiries related to Compensation, Pension, Survivor Benefits, Claims, Appeals, Status Requests, Etc. and assistance with the claim process.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Disability Network Partners name Tinian champs of the year

The Disability Network Partners—as network of agencies and individual advocates—has recognized nine individuals on Tinian as Champions of the Year awardees, capping off the celebration of March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

The awardees are:

■ **Advocate of the Year: Frances H. Diaz,** who is a strong advocate not just for her daughter but others as well. She believes that every individual with a disability can maximizes his/her potential and that they can live independently.

■ **Business Advocate of the Year** went to JC Café. The business establishment has been a supporter of the VOICES Tinian Chapter. JC Cafe is the only private business to listen to the challenges their customers with disabilities have faced and addressed them by taking action.

■ **Community Advocate of the Year** award was given to Tracy O. Sanchez. Tracy is seen taking charge of committees during the VOTC events and fundraisers. She volunteers as well as donate. You can count her in any of the planning and implementing of activities.

■ **Educator Advocate of the Year** was given to Janessa M. Aquino, who was probably the only educator of the year nominee and is not a Special Education teacher. Aquino sets high standards for her students with disabilities and takes it upon herself to make sure that she provides appropriate accommodations and modifications in the classroom for her students to be successful.

■ **Employer Advocate of the Year** was Tinian Heath Center**.** Tinian Health Center has employed an individual with a disability for more than 10 years. The individual has become more independent and capable of performing her duties and responsibilities with minimal supervision.

■ **Family Advocate of the Year** award went to Felipe Aquino. Aquino has also devoted his time volunteering for the VOICES of the CNMI Tinian Chapter, often doing the extra to make their events successful. Aquino has also volunteered to meet with local legislators to discuss the challenges that individuals with disabilities face in the CNMI.

■ **Legislative Advocate of the Year** was given Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider, who was the Legislator of the Year both for Tinian and Rota. Hofschneider has consistently attended meetings with the VOTC CNMI and the Disability Network Partners to discuss their challenges and struggles as well as to learn how to be more accommodating in the workplace and in the legislature.

■ **Public Entity Advocate of the Year** award went to Northern Marianas College – Tinian Campus. NMC Tinian is one of the most accessible buildings on the island. They have ADA-compliant parking spaces, restrooms (touchless faucets, soap dispensers, towel dispensers in bathrooms), door handles, etc. The staff has also been very accommodating to individuals with disabilities, often allowing VOTC Tinian and DNP agencies to use their facilities for meetings, trainings and other events. NMC Rota was the awardee for Rota.

■ **Self- Advocate of the Year** was awarded to Monika H. Diaz, who was also the Self-Advocate of the Year for Saipan. Currently off-island for medical reasons, Diaz actively sought out jobs that would be accommodating to her disability. Despite facing many challenges and discrimination in her workplace, Diaz did not give up and leave her job. She advocated for accommodations with her employer that allowed for accessible programs (i.e., digital timesheet, Bluetooth headset) for future employees. She continues to plan and put things in action remotely. Diaz is committed to making Tinian and the CNMI a more accessible place for the people with disabilities. ***(PR)***

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Guam warns of jellyfish danger

**HAGATNA, Guam**—The Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Fisheries would like to remind people to be on the lookout for box jellyfish (*Physalia physalis*). Box jellyfish can be found on the beach or in the water, especially on reef flats. Box jellyfish are anticipated from April 3-5, 2021. Both box jellyfish and Indo-Pacific man-o-wars can sting even if washed on the beach and dead. If box jellyfish or Indo-Pacific man-o-wars are seen, notify DAWR Fisheries at (671) 735-0289/91/94 or email fisheries@doag.guam.gov. ***(PR)***

### Guam issues tax refunds

**HAGATNA, Guam**—The Department of Revenue & Taxation has processed and the Department of Administration will mail checks for *or* pay by direct deposit 2,120 tax year 2020 and prior income tax refunds this week. Approximately 9,500 manual returns were filed on Feb. 12, 2021.

Total income tax refunds paid is approximately $5,813,594, including refunds garnished to repay government debts. These represent payment of 2,120 error-free returns filed on or before Feb. 12, 2021.

To check the status of your income tax refund log into your individual account at https://www.myguamtax.com/ and use the '*Lookup Status of 1040 Refund*' tool. ***(PR)***

## NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Building Services Corporation, a CNMI corporation was dissolved on December 5, 2017. Building Services Corporation filed articles of dissolution with the CNMI Registrar of Corporation on January 18, 2018. This notice is being published in accordance with 4CMC 4607.

Any creditor and person with outstanding claims against the Company is requested to notify the corporate office as soon as possible.

The claim may be sent to:
Building Service Corporation
P.O. Box 502948,
Saipan, MP 96950

The President

## NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Korean American Cable Vision Inc., a CNMI corporation was dissolved on September 30, 2016. Korean American Cable Vision Inc. filed articles of dissolution with the CNMI Registrar of Corporation on March 29, 2021. This notice is being published in accordance with 4CMC 4607.

Any creditor and person with outstanding claims against the Company is requested to notify the corporate office as soon as possible.

The claim may be sent to:
Korean American Cable Vision Inc.
P.O. Box 502948,
Saipan, MP 96950

The President


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# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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## EDITORIAL

# Southern border: Sure it's a crisis; it never stopped being one

Stoking fear of brown-skinned immigrants infiltrating the U.S. border with Mexico has been the preferred strategy of Republicans in the Donald Trump era, so it's no surprise that the usual suspects in the white nationalism crowd were quick to declare a crisis in the early days of the Joe Biden administration. And, alas, President Joe Biden has played right into their hands with cautious and uncertain messaging that was slow to acknowledge the recent increase in border crossings, failed to adequately warn against human trafficking and barred reporters from border facilities for children.

As a result, right-wing media got an unexpected pathway to ratings—an opportunity to distract from insurrections, GOP opposition to a popular COVID-19 relief bill and continued pandemic worries with 24/7 talking about a border crisis. And, make no mistake, any news reporting that centers on whether a White House spokesperson will use the term "crisis" or not is about as trumped-up (or perhaps Trumped-up) as reporting gets.

Particularly rich has been Republican fear-mongering of immigrants they claim are bringing with them the coronavirus, even as elected GOP officials in border states unwisely lift pandemic-related restrictions including, incredibly, use of face masks. Apparently, the governor of Texas isn't worried about COVID-19 being spread around his state despite a 6% positivity rate and nearly 24,000 new cases recorded just this past week unless it originated with an undocumented individual.

If that fear of immigrants tracking in disease sounds familiar, that's because it's been the common refrain of the anti-immigrant crowd since at least the 19th century. Of course, immigrants are perfectly capable of contracting COVID as all humans are. Seeing them as a threat, but not your next-door neighbor, takes a special kind of xenophobia.

Let's also stipulate some additional points: Human trafficking is bad. U.S. border facilities are inadequate. Little children should not be walking alone to the U.S. from Honduras. The Biden administration hems and haws a lot. But what's clearly missing from the "crisis" blather is much-needed context, a point President Biden made repeatedly during his Thursday news conference.

First, what's happening is hardly unprecedented. Monthly apprehensions for illegal border crossing are up, but they've been higher at other times during the Trump years and before. Second, most people who attempt to make the crossing are sent back. Third, the Biden administration has not overturned the policy of expelling undocumented people apprehended at the border if they test positive for COVID-19. And finally, illegal border crossing—with all its human toll—never stopped during the Trump years.

What was diminished significantly was an opportunity to seek legal asylum in the U.S., a situation President Biden has reversed. So if anyone is going to measure the human suffering of children traveling great distances to enter the

*See SOUTHERN on Next Page*

GLOBAL WARMING COULD CAUSE HUMAN EXTINCTION.
NEWS
FINALLY, SOME NEWS THAT'S NOT ABOUT THE VIRUS.
MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN 2021 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

# A rusty democracy creaks toward soulful fix

**By MARTIN SCHRAM**
Tribune News Service

*Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for* Tribune News Service*, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.*

Ever since we bid good riddance to god-awful 2020, America's news consumers have had increasingly unsettling reasons to feel like we are somehow trapped inside another of those trite Hollywood sequels:

Groundhog Year: 2021?

Every time we glanced at a news screen, we were still seeing those same-old breaking news headlines: Mindless governors making voters feel good by reopening states too soon in mid-pandemic. Mobs of dumbass Gen Z spring breakers, partying mask-less—but maybe menacing us all by igniting a new COVID-19 variant spike. Waves of desperate migrants, including unaccompanied children and teens surging across our U.S.-Mexico border.

But on Wednesday at 1:27 p.m., America's still-new 46th president, after delaying way too long, finally held his first White House press conference. At last Americans could see those big problems being dealt with, rather than being ducked, dodged and denied.

Americans could also see there was professional rustiness on both sides of the microphone. Unfortunately, President Joe Biden made a few boastful misstatements. Also unfortunately, many of my colleagues in the White House press corps asked questions that were sometimes ill-conceived. Questioners missed opportunities to follow up by asking things ordinary people at the other end of the news funnel really wanted them to ask.

Yet the most important takeaway was clear: At last, all the world could see that America has found and restored its lost national soul.

That much was clear after a reporter asked President Biden: "Did you move too quickly to roll back some of the executive orders of your predecessor?"

Biden replied that "rolling back the policies of separating children from their mothers? I make no apology for that…. I make no apologies for ending programs that did not exist before Trump became president that have an incredibly negative impact on the law, international law, as well as on human dignity."

This press conference was a bit bizarre from the get-go. It began with Biden announcing new successes and goals in his effort to vaccinate America. Then came the questions. And in this moment when governors have rushed to open their economies while pandemic cases are increasing, and mask-less frolickers endanger us all, here is the total of COVID-19 pandemic questions that were asked during the entire press conference: Zero.

At times it seemed more like a game of journalistic T-ball. The first questioner cited four topics Biden had promised to improve—immigration reform, gun control, voting rights, climate change—and then merely asked: "How far are you willing to go to achieve those promises that you made to the American people?"

Biden took hundreds of words to reveal: "Well, I plan on making progress on all of them."

The president repeatedly insisted the migrant surge isn't a surge, just a seasonal thing. But no reporter noted that Biden's Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas recently called the migrant surge the largest in 20 years. And the surge of unaccompanied minors is on a record-setting pace to exceed 17,000.

Biden also rejected the notion that the surge of unaccompanied kids and teens is happening because he is perceived as being far more decent than Trump. But the good news for reality-checkers was that ABC News' Cecilia Vega had done actual reporting at the border that challenged Biden's assertion:

"I met 9-year-old Yossell who walked here from Honduras by himself along with another little boy. He had that phone number on him and we were able to call his family. His mother says that she sent her son to this country because she believes that you are not deporting unaccompanied minors like her son."

Yossell's mother was right—that is Biden's compassionate and humane policy. Indeed, Biden broke some news by revealing a new policy will require authorities to call within 24 hours the phone number minors are carrying. In the past, officials shamefully neglected to make those calls for weeks. Alas, Biden's news was buried in one of his long answers. And most (maybe all) reporters buried or overlooked his news nugget.

Here's the deal: As Joe well knows, children and teens are being sent on this perilous journey to save them from gang violence back home where corrupt cops and officials are paid off by gangs and drug lords. But they are walking this perilous path only because all the governments involved have failed to act in the name of humanity to let them apply from home.

Can't we find a safe, sane, soulful solution—pronto!—for those frightened kids to apply for immigration to the United States from their own countries? Can't they be allowed to wait in safe sanctuaries, run by the U.S. embassies, for the rest of their lives to begin?

**EDITORIAL POLICY** Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# How the 'Build Back Better' plan can benefit US territories

*Editor's note: The following is the author's written testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources' oversight hearing on "How the Biden Administration's Build Back Better plan can benefit the U.S. territories." It is being published as a series due to its length. The first part was published on March 26, 2021; the second on March 29, 2021.*

***Third part of a series***

The CNMI's Draft Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan envisions applying Smart, Safe Growth and other development guidelines to holistically improve resource use across sectors. Much like the "Build Back Better" initiative, the CNMI's first Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan recognizes the need to align infrastructure investments to achieve modern infrastructure that supports good education and health systems as well as good paying jobs. The goals and objectives identified in the Comprehensive Sustainable Development Plan identify metrics for renewable energy and water systems deployment while recognizing need to also continue to invest in education and social services. These planning efforts align with national efforts to address the climate crisis, build a clean energy economy, address environmental injustice, and create millions of good-paying jobs. As reflected in the CNMI's 2019 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, investment in our social and built infrastructure is anticipated to help diversify and stabilize our economy, an effort that is needed now more than ever as we work to recover from the financial and community impacts of COVID19.

## Challenges and opportunities

Dedicating resources toward the financing of infrastructure is critical but is only one step toward the modernization of the CNMI's infrastructure. This committee is familiar with the CNMI's ongoing struggles to support the demands of the economy with the present workforce, and in the environment of severe infrastructure demands, the availability of construction workers in particular represents a significant limitation to our ability to advance our community. As the nation works to Build Back Better, there are opportunities to acknowledge and address the unique capacity and infrastructure challenges of the U.S. territories in order to work toward national efforts to provide immediate and long-lasting relief to our communities and businesses.

As indicated in the recent CNMI Economic Census, produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, the CNMI currently has 2,803 individuals employed in the constructions trades. By way of demonstrating the severe limitation this has on the ability to undertake large-scale and essential developments, one project alone, the Tinian Divert Airfield construction by the U.S. Air Force, has the potential to require as much as 2,099 construction workers for the development of this critical infrastructure project for the United States armed forces. This one development may require 75% of the available construction labor present in the CNMI. The ramifications are not solely isolated to availability of workers. As increased demands continue to be placed in support of ongoing developments, costs associated with construction will grow rapidly, reducing the efficacy of federal infrastructure dollars and limiting the range of opportunities that would otherwise be available per dollar of investment in the larger United States.

In one year alone, between 2019 and 2020, the average wages within the broad classification of construction occupations increased by 26.3%. With construction wages far in excess of federal minimum wage standards and in line with prevailing wages across occupations, it is clear that the issue is centered around the supply of labor available to a small island economy of our size.

The prudent utilization of federal funds, in both proposals contained in the Build America Better package, or in the present construction activities to support military development and disaster recovery and resilience requires a long-term solution to the CNMI's construction worker difficulties.

**By RALPH DLG TORRES**
*Special to the* Saipan Tribune

*Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*

I ask for this initiative to revisit this longstanding conversation, and for your understanding of our circumstances both in need for greater levels of infrastructure investment and the means by which we can adequately utilize this investment to break ground and complete these projects. In 2020, through the Further Consolidation Appropriations Act of 2020, Congress recognized these limitations in providing for a separate allocation of 3,000 CW-1 visas for foreign workers engaged in construction trades, with the caveat that the workers must be employed in the service of an existing contract directly connected to or associated with recovery from a presidentially declared major disaster or emergency. I would submit that the present state of the CNMI's infrastructure constitutes a looming emergency, and that this apportionment be broad in its application to permit the 3,000 CW-1 allotment for all construction activities, to support continued public and private investment throughout the CNMI.

***To be continued***

## SOUTHERN

***From Page 8***

U.S. illegally, they should also measure the past suffering of refugee families denied entry despite persecution based on race, religion or political views.

In reality, the U.S. lacks a sustainable, rational immigration policy and has for decades. It just got demonstrably worse in the Trump years as his supporters were convinced that building a wall with Mexico was the solution to virtually any problem facing this country. And this isn't just about the undocumented but about legal immigration, too. The United States does not allow enough of the latter, and that's what has bulked up the former.

A rational change of policy would surely start with providing a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants so that they might be fully productive and protected members of society. And perhaps the second move might involve a return to family-based immigration that would allow lawful Americans to sponsor relatives living outside the country. Although disparaged as "chain migration," this is a system that works and helped build a country founded by immigrants.

There are many other areas in need of reform, from restoring the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to boosting the H-1B visa program that has long provided temporary skilled foreign workers for everything from Johns Hopkins medical research to Chesapeake Bay blue crab packing plants. Immigration policy is complicated. Stoking racist fear of nonwhite "others" is not.

The Biden administration needs to find its footing, better explain to the public why the nation needs overdue immigration reforms, like the kind President Ronald Reagan once endorsed, and do so as clearly and transparently as possible. Biden may not be the Great Communicator, but he did a better job of it Thursday. Whether that will convince many of the filibuster-prone Republicans in the Senate is another matter altogether.

**© 2021 *The Baltimore Sun***

# To celebrate being fully vaccinated I took a trip. On Chicago's 'L'

On the day that I was fully vaccinated against COVID-19, I decided to take a trip.

This was on Tuesday, exactly two weeks after my second dose of vaccine, a day I'd been waiting for the way a kid waits for Santa Claus. When the day finally came, I woke up to a gust of fresh air, the sense of a door opening to reveal a remembered world.

Before I continue, let me say: I know that getting even a first dose of the vaccine remains no more than a wish for most Americans. But being over 65 occasionally has advantages, and whenever you reach your fully vaccinated day, you'll know it's a milestone worth marking.

In that celebratory spirit, I decided to do something I'd longed to do but hadn't done in a year.

Get on a plane? Nope. Not yet. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still cautions against travel unless it's necessary. But I wanted to go somewhere, see the world from a different angle. And so I fished around in a junk drawer and found my passport to freedom.

AKA my Ventra card.

I was going to ride the Brown Line "L" to the Loop and back.

There are people who have continued to ride public transportation through the pandemic, many of them workers who don't have any other way to get to and from their jobs. For most of us, though, riding around in closed spaces with strangers hasn't been a risk worth taking.

Now here I was, tapping my old card on the turnstile reader, elated by the familiar ping that confirmed, "Yes, you do have money left on this card!"

I hiked up the familiar, grungy stairs toward a promising patch of sky.

Then there was Chicago, the way you can see it only from an elevated train platform, looking not so different than it had a year ago. There were wooden porches and brick chimneys and old wooden stairs, flat roofs and sloping roofs, the peeling paint of old turrets, graffiti etched so high on walls it was hard to imagine how it got there. Out on the horizon, beyond the tops of bare trees, stretched Chicago's skyscrapers.

I hadn't waited long when the train rumbled up from the distance, headlights on, looking just like I remembered. The metal doors opened with the familiar ruckus. The train set off down the tracks with a familiar clatter.

Only four other people were in the car. They sat far apart. All of us were masked. I glanced down at the blue seat in front of me. Someone had etched a uniquely male body part into the plastic.

Yes, the "L" was still the "L." The pandemic hadn't changed everything.

But if the ride felt familiar, it didn't feel the same. The train rocked past theaters and restaurants where I'd once gone; they were now closed temporarily or forever. Cars passed in the streets below, but not as many as there used to be.

After I'd been riding for a while, a male voice announced, "Doors open on the right at Merchandise Mart." I was glad to recognize his voice. But when the doors opened and two of the passengers in my car got off, no one got on. The platform at that usually busy stop was empty.

Same thing at the next stop. From there, I rode alone.

From the "L," I could see through the upper windows of Loop buildings, which helped to explain the empty platforms. In a few windows, the lights were on and bodies moved around at a distance from each other.

But many offices, places once bustling with people, now sat dark, their indoor window ledges resembling still lifes from a vanished time: pens crowded in coffee cups, bottles of lotion, staplers, objects that probably hadn't felt a human hand in a year.

And chairs. In those empty offices sat so many chairs. Beautiful, ergonomic chairs pushed up against desks or arranged around conference tables. Empty chairs. Waiting chairs. Chairs that hadn't felt a human derriere in a year.

Eventually, the train pulled into the Washington and Wabash stop, where in a pre-pandemic age I would have gotten off to go to work. Now through the "L" window, I watched the stop fade into the distance as the train clattered on. In my empty "L" car, I headed home, fully vaccinated though not fully liberated, glad that I'd gone to visit the waiting city.

**By MARY SCHMICH**
Chicago Tribune

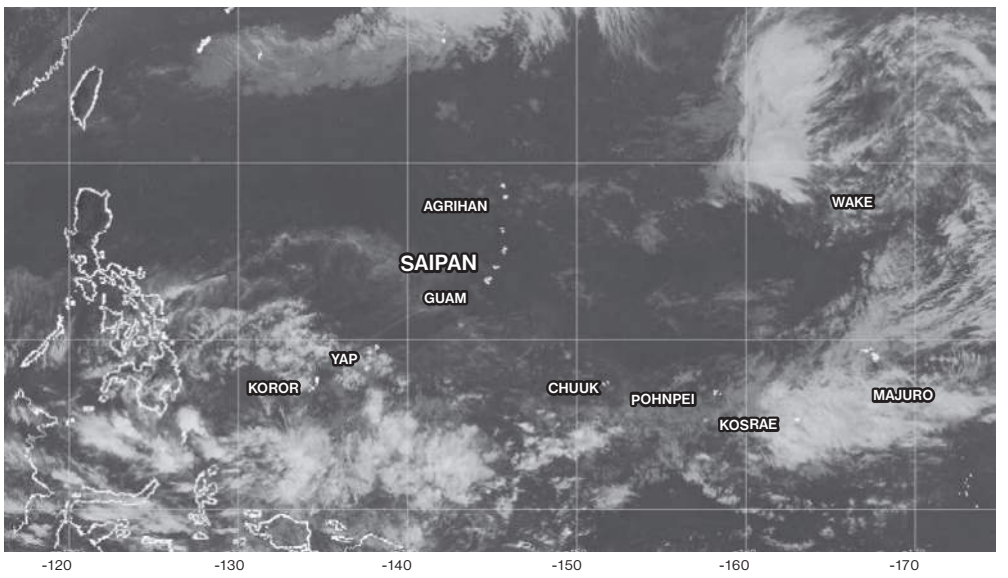
*Mary Schmich is a columnist for the* Chicago Tribune *and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.*

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph. | Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers. Light and variable winds. | Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers. | Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers. | Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers. |
| 86º 76º | 86º 76º | 86º 76º | 86º 76º | 86º 76º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 11:55 AM, MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies with isolated showers are seen crossing the Marianas, especially near Guam. The satellite imagery also shows a greater concentration of clouds and showers well to our east, but heading this way. The Ritidian and Tanapag buoys show seas near 6 feet, with a water temperature of 83 degrees.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 87 \| 79 °F |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 85 \| 77 °F |
| Yap | Mostly Cloudy | 90 \| 71 °F |
| Chuuk | Partly Cloudy | 85 \| 79 °F |
| Pohnpei | Overcast | 82 \| 78 °F |
| Kosrae | Mostly Cloudy | 85 \| 79 °F |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 84 \| 80 °F |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:14 AM | 6:29 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:13 AM | 6:29 PM |
| Thursday | 6:12 AM | 6:29 PM |
| Friday | 6:11 AM | 6:29 PM |
| Saturday | 6:11 AM | 6:29 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 7:17 AM | 8:02 PM |
| Wednesday | - | 8:03 AM | 9:04 PM |
| Thursday | - | 8:53 AM | 10:07 PM |
| Friday | - | 9:45 AM | 11:11 PM |
| Saturday | - | 10:42 AM | - |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Partly Cloudy | 74 \| 64 °F |
| Beijing | Clear | 60 \| 36 °F |
| Hong Kong | Partly Cloudy | 72 \| 61 °F |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 85 \| 71 °F |
| London | Clear | 55 \| 40 °F |
| Los Angeles | Clear | 71 \| 52 °F |
| Manila | Clear | 91 \| 78 °F |
| Melbourne | Partly Cloudy | 89 \| 56 °F |
| Miami | Clear | 81 \| 69 °F |
| New York | Cloudy | 49 \| 42 °F |
| Osaka | Light Rain | 56 \| 44 °F |
| Paris | Clear | 59 \| 41 °F |
| Pusan | Partly cloudy | 56 \| 37 °F |
| Rome | Partly cloudy | 65 \| 46 °F |
| Salem | Cloudy | 53 \| 44 °F |
| San Francisco | Clear | 60 \| 48 °F |
| Seoul | Clear | 53 \| 33 °F |
| Tokyo | Rain | 50 \| 42 °F |
| Washington, DC | Partly cloudy | 68 \| 52 °F |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 2:41 AM | Low Tide | 0.28 |
| 8:36 AM | High Tide | 2.01 |
| 3:06 PM | Low Tide | 0.16 |
| 9:11 PM | High Tide | 2.02 |

## STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 29, 2021

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 6:30am | 7:10am | 1, 4, 5, 6 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 6:30am | 8:50pm | 5 via Guam |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA183 | 7:05pm | 8:50pm | 5 |
| UA183 | 7:15pm | 9:10pm | 1, 3, |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 4:50am | 5:31am | 1, 4, 5, 6 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184/174 | 9:50pm | 5:31am+1 | 5 via Guam |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 9:50pm | 3:45am+1 | 5 |
| UA184 | 10:25pm | 4:10am+1 | 1, 3 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat |
| 1303 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat |
| 3103 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |
| 1212 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

# Business

## ECO-PRO SANITIZING & DISINFECTING COMPANY

# Another company takes up mantle in fight against COVID-19

ECO-PRO Sanitizing & Disinfecting Company's services can be used in residential and commercial buildings, schools, hospitals and healthcare settings, hospitality, transportation, automotive, sports and fitness, airports, daycares, churches, and others.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**By MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

One of the companies that stepped up to the plate in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic is ECO-PRO Sanitizing & Disinfecting Company.

Established in June 2020, ECO-PRO offers its services by using electrostatic sprayers to sanitize, disinfect, and kill 99.9% of a broad spectrum of any virus, and bacteria, including mold and mildew, "superbugs" like MRSA and H1N1 a Sars-coV-2, and the virus that causes COVID-19.

Operations manager Tanner Kenty said electrostatic sprayers is a cutting-edge technology that has become the new standard in infection control in the fight against COVID-19.

"These sprayers generate positively charged solutions onto all surfaces, wrapping objects, and evenly coating all sides. This is possible due to the attraction of the positively and negatively charged particles. …We can sanitize and disinfect cars, homes, offices, buildings and any establishment within one spray of our solution!" he said.

ECO-PRO also takes pride in its work and the integrity of its product and opts to use only the products that meet the stringent standards of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Sanitation Foundation, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"Using the specialized solutions, the sprayed mist clings onto and coats all surfaces including hard-to-reach areas, effectively killing 99.9% of bacteria in 60 seconds. It's quick, effective, and environmentally friendly. The solutions are effective against mildew, mold, viruses, and bad odor. It's quick, effective, and efficient. It's also non-toxic, doesn't use bleach, and no rinsing is required," added Kenty.

ECO-PRO's services can be used in residential and commercial buildings, schools, hospitals and healthcare settings, hospitality, transportation, automotive, sports and fitness, airports, daycares, churches, and others.

"So far some of the places we've sanitized and disinfected include parts of the airport where passengers pass through, the emergency operations center for Homeland Security, Marianas High School, Hopwood Middle School, Chacha Oceanview Middle School, Tanapag Middle School, Garapan Elementary School, Saipan Southern High School, and Northern Marianas College," said Kenty.

Because it's aware of the economic hardship businesses in the CNMI are currently experiencing due to COVID-19, ECO-PRO offers rates that are calculated by square footage. "Prices are based on cents per square footage," said Kenty.

ECO-PRO is located at the MSV Building in Chalan Kanoa. It's open from 7am to 5pm everyday, but conducts their cleaning and disinfecting service at the convenience of their clients.

To request electrostatic sanitizing and disinfecting services at ECO-PRO, call (670) 284-0823, contact them via Whatsapp 284-0823, or email Kenty at kenty.ecopro670@gmail.com.

## Ship 'partially refloated,' but still stuck in Suez Canal

**SUEZ, Egypt** (AP)—Engineers on Monday "partially refloated" the colossal container ship that continues to block traffic through the Suez Canal, a canal services firm said, without providing further details about when the vessel would be set free.

Satellite data from MarineTraffic.com showed that the ship's bulbous bow, once firmly lodged in the canal's eastern bank, had been wrested from the shore.

Nearly a week ago, the skyscraper-sized Ever Given got stuck sideways in the crucial waterway, creating a massive traffic jam. The obstruction is holding up $9 billion each day in global trade and straining supply chains already burdened by the coronavirus pandemic. As of Monday, 367 vessels, carrying everything from crude oil to cattle, are still waiting to pass through the canal, while dozens more are taking the alternate route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip, adding some two weeks to journeys and threatening delivery delays.

The partial freeing of the vessel came after intensive efforts to push and pull the vessel with 10 tugboats when the full moon brought spring tide, Leth Agencies said, raising the canal's water level and hopes for a breakthrough.

A top pilot with the canal authority, speaking on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to talk to journalists, confirmed that the ship had been partially refloated.

Lt. Gen. Osama Rabei, the head of the Suez Canal Authority, said workers continued "pulling maneuvers" to refloat the vessel early Monday.

Overnight, several dredgers had toiled to vacuum up 27,000 cubic meters of sand and mud around the ship. Another powerful tugboat, Carlo Magno, was racing to the scene to join the efforts.

Although the vessel is vulnerable to damage in its current position, Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd., the company that owns the Ever Given, dismissed concerns on Monday, saying that the ship's engine was functional and it could pursue its trip normally when freed.

## Biden economic plan to focus 1st on infrastructure this week

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—President Joe Biden will lay out the first part of his multitrillion-dollar economic recovery package this week, focusing on rebuilding roads, bridges and other infrastructure, followed by a separate plan later in April addressing child and health care.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki confirmed on Sunday the administration's plans to split the package into two legislative proposals, part of an effort to get support from congressional Republicans. But she adds that "we'll work with the Senate and House to see how it should move forward."

Biden will release details in a speech Wednesday in Pittsburgh about his proposal for federal investments in physical infrastructure, an issue that has drawn Republican support despite wariness over a pricey package so soon after passage of the $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief plan.

Democrats, meanwhile, have been aiming for a broader package that could include policy changes on green energy, immigration and other issues—as well as make permanent some of the just-passed COVID-19 assistance such as child tax credits. Many are ready to bypass Republicans, if they have to.

Psaki told "Fox News Sunday" the White House had yet to settle on its legislative strategy, "but I will say that I don't think Republicans in this country think we should be 13th in the world as it relates to infrastructure.""

"Roads, railways, rebuilding them, that's not a partisan issue," she said.

A separate proposal later in April then "will address a lot of issues that American people are struggling with—child care, the cost of health care," Psaki said.

Plans are still in flux, with the White House recently discussing a combined $3 trillion in spending to boost the economy and improve quality of life, according to a person familiar with the options who insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

"The total package we're still working out, but he's going to introduce some ways to pay for that, and he's eager to hear ideas from both parties as well," Psaki said.

The Biden administration will also release this week its proposed discretionary budget for fiscal 2022, providing insight into the president's top priorities and laying down a marker for Congress. The budget proposal will include funding levels by agencies and guidance on investments.

The proposed budget will be the first in a decade not to be limited by caps on discretionary spending, making it easier for Biden to propose spending increases for longtime Democratic priorities such as education and housing.

On infrastructure, Republicans support a narrow bill focused on roads and bridges and balk at the size and scope of Biden's overall plan as well as his focus on the environment. During the presidential campaign, Biden pledged $2 trillion in "accelerated" investments to shift to cleaner energy, build half a million charging stations for electric vehicles, support public transit and repair roads and bridges.

# Nation

## Colorado massacre spurs calls for state action on gun deaths

**SALT LAKE CITY** (AP)— For the second time in less than a week, a 21-year-old man used a gun purchased legally in the United States to massacre people simply working or visiting a business. The mass shootings in Colorado and Georgia are giving new urgency to state efforts to enact gun restrictions, even while showing how hard it can be to prevent a tragedy.

A gunman opened fire Monday at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado, with a weapon that resembles an AR-15 rifle, killing 10 people before he was captured. He bought the Ruger AR-556 pistol on March 16, the same day another 21-year-old man on the other side of the country killed eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, at Atlanta-area massage businesses.

President Joe Biden called for action on gun reform after the two mass shootings, and U.S. Rep. Joe Neguse, who represents Boulder, asked Biden to ban imported semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity magazines. But legislation in Congress faces an uphill climb, and it's been more than two decades since any major federal gun control laws have passed.

That means most significant gun legislation has been left to the states, including Colorado, where lawmakers have passed gun control laws in recent years. But the suspect in the supermarket shooting, Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, still could legally buy a firearm, keep it despite concerns about his mental state and open fire in a town that had tried to ban assault-style weapons.

That's led to calls for stronger action from the state, and Democratic leaders are listening. Still, support for gun rights is strong in parts of Colorado, and Second Amendment advocates argue new restrictions are not the answer.

Colorado has a law requiring background checks on almost all gun sales. The suspect had a misdemeanor assault conviction from high school, but it didn't prevent him from buying a gun from a shop near his suburban Denver home because most misdemeanors don't block people from legal firearm purchases.

The state also has a so-called red flag law that allows families to ask a judge to remove guns from people who could be dangerous. Alissa's family had concerns about his mental health and a sister-in-law had seen him with the weapon, police said.

But the law requires evidence that a person poses a significant risk in the near future. It's unclear whether anyone close to him was concerned enough to begin the court process in the six days between the gun purchase and the shooting, but general concerns about someone's behavior aren't typically enough to persuade a judge to order that weapons to be removed, said Jacob Charles, executive director of the Firearms Law Center at Duke University.

Meanwhile, a ordinance in the city of Boulder that banned assault-style weapons was struck down in court just days before the shooting because of a state law that bars local leaders from making their own gun rules. Now, state Senate Majority Leader Stephen Fenberg is drafting a bill to repeal that law. It could also be paired with other new legislation.

"There's not one answer to this problem. It has to be a complex and comprehensive set of policies because every tragedy is different," he said.

David Kopel with the libertarian think tank Independence Institute in Colorado questioned the effort to repeal the law. Allowing communities to pass their own rules could mean that law-abiding gun owners have a patchwork of rules to follow in every town they drive through, he said.

"Almost all law ultimately depends on voluntary compliance. You get more compliance when you have a uniform set of laws that everyone can know," Kopel said.

Some Colorado communities want to go the other way and have looser gun laws than those at the state level, he said.

Instead of passing new laws, Kopel argued, the state should increase funding for mental health treatment. In Alissa's case, authorities have said his family was concerned about his mental health and defense attorneys are asking for an evaluation.

To keep guns away from people in crisis, gun control activists say Colorado should create a waiting period. Both Colorado and Georgia, like the majority of states, allow people to get a gun right away. In the Atlanta area, the shooting happened just hours after the purchase.

AP

Mourners console each other along the temporary fence line outside the parking lot of a King Soopers grocery store, the site of a mass shooting in which 10 people died, Friday, March 26, 2021, in Boulder, Colo.

## Jurors in ex-officer's high-profile trial face heavy burden

**MINNEAPOLIS** (AP)— One prospective juror's voice quivered as she told attorneys during jury selection that she feared for her family's safety if chosen for the panel that will decide the fate of a white former police officer charged with killing George Floyd. When the judge excused her, the woman exhaled in relief.

Jurors at all trials feel pressure, knowing their decisions will alter lives. But the weight on jurors in Minneapolis is in a whole different category as they'll be asked whether to assign guilt in the death of a Black man that prompted some of the largest protests in U.S. history.

Bystander video of the confrontation is expected to be a key exhibit at trial, with opening statements set for Monday. It shows Derek Chauvin using his knee to pin Floyd's neck to the ground for about nine minutes during an arrest last May. Floyd cried he couldn't breathe and called for his mother before his body went limp.

A looming question is whether Chauvin, charged with murder and manslaughter, can get a fair trial with so much pressure on jurors and with some potentially fearing the consequences to the city and country should they reach a verdict others oppose.

A high fence installed around the courthouse for the trial is a daily reminder for jurors of security concerns. On some days, protesters gathered just beyond it, holding signs that read, "Convict Derek Chauvin" and "The World Is Watching."

Jurors are well aware that Floyd's death led to months of protests in Minneapolis and cities nationwide. They're aware, too, that thieves took advantage of demonstrations to break into, ransack and sometimes burn down stores.

A judge denied a request to change the trial's venue, a ruling Chauvin could cite on appeal if convicted. Appeals with change-of-venue disputes at their core are rare but not unprecedented.

A U.S. appeals court in 1999 vacated white Detroit police officer Larry Nevers' conviction in the beating death of a Black motorist, even though evidence against him seemed strong. The court noted how at least one juror heard that the National Guard was on standby in case Nevers was acquitted and violence ensued.

"The Court cannot imagine a more prejudicial extraneous influence than that of a juror discovering that the City he or she resides in is bracing for a riot," it said. It added that letting the conviction stand would send the wrong message that rights to an impartial jury "do not extend to an obviously guilty defendant."

Similarly, an appeals court in Florida tossed the conviction and ordered a new trial for a plain-clothed Hispanic officer, William Lozano, who fatally shot Black motorcyclist Clement Lloyd in 1989 as Lloyd sought to elude a patrol car trying to stop him for a traffic violation. A passenger on the motorcycle, Allan Blanchard, who was also Black, died in the resulting crash. Protests erupted in Miami.

## Record rains cause flash flooding in Tennessee; 4 dead

Torrential rains across Tennessee flooded homes and at least one church and left roads impassable, prompting dozens of people to be rescued in the Nashville area. Authorities said four bodies were found Sunday in the flood's aftermath.

Nashville received more than 7 inches of rain, the second-highest two-day rainfall total ever recorded, Mayor John Cooper said at a news conference Sunday.

Ebony Northern said a normally tame creek running through her Nashville apartment complex swiftly rose after heavy rain started late Saturday night. Within an hour or so, she could see some first-floor units in other parts of the complex being flooded. She said people moved to the second floor and she also heard calls for boats come in over the fire department scanner.

"The units are a mess. Some of the outside air conditioning units have floated off," she said Sunday morning.

She said the American Red Cross arrived to assist her neighbors.

At least one church canceled in-person Palm Sunday services. The New Tribe Church in Mt. Juliet said on Facebook that knee-deep water flooded the building, busted out the glass of its front entrance and sent chairs through a hallway.

"I am smiling but our hearts are devastated," Pastor Jarod Smith said at the start of an online service. "We are standing in our worship center and there's just not enough words to describe what it actually looks like."

Nashville Fire Chief William Swann said swift-water teams were placed on standby in anticipation of the storms. At least 130 people were rescued from cars, apartments and homes, while about 40 dogs were moved from a Nashville boarding kennel, Camp Bow Wow, to another location.

Cooper said first responders walked along creek beds Sunday and worked with the Red Cross to canvass affected neighborhoods.

To the south in Williamson County, over 34 swift water rescues were carried out, according to county Emergency Management Agency Director Todd Horton. As many as 18 homes in one neighborhood had to be evacuated.

# Asia

## FOLLOWING MYANMAR AIR STRIKES

# Thousands flee into Thailand

**YANGON, Myanmar** (AP)—Thai authorities along the country's northwestern border braced themselves Monday for a possible influx of more ethnic Karen villagers fleeing new airstrikes from the Myanmar military.

Myanmar military aircraft carried out three strikes overnight Sunday into Monday, according to Free Burma Rangers, a humanitarian relief agency that delivers medical and other assistance to villagers. The strikes possibly injured one person but caused no apparent fatalities, a member of the agency said.

Earlier Sunday, an estimated 3,000 people crossed the river dividing the two countries into Thailand's Mae Hong Son province following two days of aerial attacks.

Video shot that day shows a group of villagers, including many young children, resting in a forest clearing inside Myanmar, having fled their homes. They carried their possessions in bundles and baskets.

In Sunday's previous attacks, Myanmar military aircraft dropped bombs on a Karen guerrilla position in an area on the Salween River in Karen state's Mutraw district, according to workers for two humanitarian relief agencies.

Two guerrillas were killed and many more were wounded in those attacks, said a member of the Free Burma Rangers.

AP

In this photo released by the Free Burma Rangers, Karen villagers gather in the forests as they hide from military airstrikes in the Deh Bu Noh area of the Papun district, north Karen state, Myanmar, Sunday, March 28, 2021.

On Saturday night, two Myanmar military planes twice bombed Deh Bu Noh village in Mutraw district, killing at least two villagers.

The attacks may have been retaliation for the Karen National Liberation Army, which is fighting for greater autonomy for the Karen people, attacking and capturing a government military outpost on Saturday morning.

According to Thoolei News, an online site that carries official information from the KNU, eight government soldiers including a second lieutenant were captured in the attack and 10 were killed, including a lieutenant colonel who was a deputy battalion commander. The report said one Karen guerrilla had been killed.

The tension at the frontier comes as the leaders of the resistance to last month's coup that toppled Myanmar's elected government are seeking to have the Karen and other ethnic groups band together and join them as allies, which would add an armed element to their struggle.

The airstrikes mark an escalation in the increasingly violent crackdown by the Myanmar government against opponents of the Feb. 1 military takeover.

At least 114 people across the country were killed by security forces on Saturday alone, including several children — a toll that has prompted a U.N. human rights expert to accuse the junta of committing "mass murder" and to criticize the international community for not doing enough to stop it.

## Suicide bomb hits Palm Sunday Mass in Indonesia, 20 wounded

**MAKASSAR, Indonesia** (AP)—Two attackers believed to be members of a militant network that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group blew themselves up outside a packed Roman Catholic cathedral during a Palm Sunday Mass on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, wounding at least 20 people, police said.

Rev. Wilhelmus Tulak, a priest at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral in Makassar, said he had just finished celebrating Palm Sunday Mass when a loud bang shocked his congregation. He said the blast went off at about 10:30 a.m. as a first batch of churchgoers was walking out of the church and another group was coming in.

He said security guards at the church were suspicious of two men on a motorcycle who wanted to enter the building and when they went to confront them, one of the men detonated his explosives.

Police later said both attackers were killed instantly and evidence collected at the scene indicated one of the two was a woman. The wounded included four guards and several churchgoers, police said.

National Police Chief Gen. Listyo Sigit Prabowo told reporters when he visited the crime scene late Sunday that the two attackers are believed to have been members of the militant group Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, which has pledged allegiance to Islamic State group and was responsible for deadly suicide bombings on Indonesian churches in 2018.

He said one of the attackers was believed to have links to a church bombing in the Philippines.

The attack a week before Easter in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation came as the country was on high alert following December's arrest of the leader of the Southeast Asian militant group, Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been designated a terror group by many nations.

Indonesia has been battling militants since bombings on the resort island of Bali in 2002 killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists. Attacks aimed at foreigners have been largely replaced in recent years by smaller, less deadly strikes targeting the government, police and anti-terrorism forces and people militants consider as infidels.

Police have identified one of Sunday's attackers only by his initial, L, who they believe was connected to a 2019 suicide attack that killed 23 people at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in the Philippine province of Sulu, Prabowo said.

He said the two attackers were linked to a group of suspected militants arrested in Makassar on Jan. 6, when a police counterterrorism squad shot and killed two suspected militants and arrested 19 others. Members of the squad were initially supposed to arrest the two slain men for their alleged role in the Philippine suicide bombing.

# World

# UK eases lockdown

**LONDON** (AP)—Britain is taking another small step out of lockdown as it looks nervously at a new virus surge inundating its European neighbors.

With U.K. coronavirus vaccination rates outstripping those of European Union nations, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is easing the stark "stay at home" message that has curtailed everyday life—and kept the virus in check—for almost three months.

From Monday, it will be replaced in England with a message to stay local. People will be allowed to meet in groups of six outdoors and can resume outdoor sports such as basketball, tennis and golf.

The other parts of the U.K.—Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—are taking broadly similar steps. In Wales, thousands of people poured onto beaches and mountain spots on Saturday, after the authorities lifted travel restrictions that have been in place since December.

Most nonessential businesses remain closed, along with pubs, restaurants, gyms, cinemas, theaters, museums and sports stadiums. Millions of workers have been furloughed, with the government paying the bulk of their wages.

The U.K. has recorded more than 126,000 COVID-19 deaths, the highest toll in Europe.

Stephen Powis, medical director of the National Health Service in England, urged people to continue to follow the rules and limit contact with others, saying the easing "does not mean job done."

"We've made enormous progress that we need to build on and not squander the gains we've made," he wrote in the Sunday Telegraph newspaper.

**» But nervously eyes European virus surge**

The stringent restrictions in business and social life imposed during three lockdowns in the past year have had broad public support, though they have alarmed some lawmakers in Johnson's Conservative Party, who argue that the economic, democratic and human costs outweigh the benefits.

While many European nations are seeing a new surge in the pandemic, Britain is counting on a rapid mass-vaccination program to help it end its lockdown. More than 30 million people—57% of all U.K. adults—have received a first dose of vaccine so far, the government announced Sunday. Almost 7% of adults have had both doses.

Britain aims to give everyone over 18 a first jab by July, with second shots delivered within 12 weeks of the first.

Health officials say the program will slow down in April because of a squeeze on supplies, in part because of a delayed order from India. The EU has also threatened to block shipments of vaccines from factories in the bloc unless drugmakers—notably Anglo-Swedish firm AstraZeneca—send more shots to EU nations.

Some European politicians, under fire for their slow vaccine programs, say Britain has failed to export any vaccine doses to the continent, while millions have gone the other way. Britain disputes that characterization, saying vaccines have complex supply chains and some ingredients in Europe's shots are made in the U.K.

British Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said the government was confident it would hit its vaccination targets. He said the first doses of a vaccine made by U.S. firm Moderna would arrive in Britain in April, joining the AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech shots.

"We're confident we'll be able to deliver it and we are confident that it won't require mixing the vaccines," Dowden told the BBC.

## Many Brazilians disregard the pleas to stay at home

**RIO DE JANEIRO** (AP)—Authorities in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro begged the population to stay home, but thousands of Brazilians are traveling to coastal cities and ignoring recommendations on the first weekend of a 10-day holiday period decreed to contain the increase in COVID-19 infections in the country.

Some residents are clearing out and taking advantage of the holidays, despite warnings from authorities. Brazil's two biggest cities, Rio and Sao Paulo, have imposed extensive restrictions on nonessential activities. Their state authorities brought forward holidays to create a 10-day break period, which started Friday.

Many scenes in Brazilian cities show the difficulty that authorities are facing in enlisting the cooperation of the population to contain the spread of the virus.

In Sao Sebastiao, a city of more than 80,000 inhabitants on the Sao Paulo coast, tourists destroyed barriers installed at the access to beaches to avoid crowds, according to local reports. The city is one of those that suffered an invasion of tourists who took advantage of the holidays decreed by the state government.

"Don't come to the coast. We depend on tourism, but right now we depend on health. We need to avoid an even bigger collapse," said the city's mayor, Felipe Augusto, angered by the acts of vandalism.

In Ubatuba, another of the main cities on the Sao Paulo coast, residents burned tires on a road to try to prevent an influx of visitors.

Restrictions on activity implemented last year were half-hearted and sabotaged by President Jair Bolsonaro, who sought to stave off economic doom. He remains unconvinced of any need for clampdown, fearful that the damage to the economy could generate more unemployment and social chaos.

Brazil currently accounts for one-quarter of the entire world's daily COVID-19 deaths, far more than any other single nation, and health experts are warning that the nation is on the verge of even greater calamity. The nation's seven-day average of 2,500 deaths stands to reach to 3,000 within weeks, experts told the Associated Press.

The health system is already buckling, with almost all states' intensive care units near or at capacity. On Sunday 92.6% of ICU beds were occupied in Sao Paulo, while Rio state had an occupancy of 92%.

Rio city authorities closed 19 stores and fined 60 bars, restaurants and street vendors on Saturday for breaking rules that prohibited their operation, the mayor's press office confirmed to The Associated Press. On the city beaches, some people ignored the new rules and stayed on the sand.

# Overdrive

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

## AUTO REVIEW: Toyota Tundra TRD Pro likes to get dirty

Toyota Tundra TRD.
TOYOTA/TNS

Rural Michigan is pickup country. Ford F-250 dualllies towing equipment. Laden Silverados hustling to service jobs. Gorgeous Ram trucks prowling construction sites. And macho pickups of all stripes with big tires, menacing hood scoops and lifted suspensions eager to go beyond where the asphalt ends.

Despite its rare Toyota badge, my hulking, 2021 Tundra TRD Pro tester fits rights in. Sitting atop 32-inch Michelin all-terrain tires, Fox off-road shocks and 11 inches of ground clearance, the Lunar Rock-painted behemoth bristles with hood scoops and tow hooks.

This is not your father's Camry, but a serious, bark-chewing beast.

Think of Toyota as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The Japanese automaker has built a reputation as a dependable daily driver (backed up by years of JD Power reliability MVP awards) and a weekend track warrior. Its Toyota Racing Development (TRD) shop has climbed podiums at the highest echelons of motorsports from NASCAR to Formula One. That resume includes winning the Baja 1000, North America's premier off-road competition.

Beginning in 1998, the TRD badge started to show up on the Tacoma (Taco, as it's known to its legion of fans) as a rough-and-ready off-roader. While the Detroit Three dominated full-size trucks, Taco owned the mid-size segment with its Mr. Hyde variants leading the way.

Tundra followed with its own TRD features but has lived in Taco's shadow—its sales just half that of little brother (much less anywhere close to the Detroit Three). But Tundra got serious in 2015. It grew a comprehensive TRD Pro package (like Taco) with serious suspension and skid plate mods. It even brought back a Baja 1000 trophy in the Pro Stock class to make little brother proud.

Tundra? My TRD Pro tester is Tund-raw.

I took it to The Mounds Off-Road Vehicle Park near Mt. Morris, Mich. The Mounds is 200 acres of dirt, sand and bog. It's a place where dirt bikers, ATV owners, and Jeepsters can let out their inner child.

And where Tundra lets out Mr. Hyde.

I shifted to Neutral and turned the transfer-case dial from "2WD" to "4WD." Then I held the traction control button to turn off the nannies. When I say "held" I mean "held for a loooong time." This is a Toyota, after all, and the nannies don't retreat easily.

Once unleashed, TRD Pro had a blast. ROOOAARR! I nailed the throttle and the 381-horse 5.7-liter V-8 bellowed, the rear end slewing sideways through muddy bends. With the Fox shocks allowing extended suspension travel, Tundra bounded over a sandbox of moguls like an oversized puppy.

WHUMP! It's easy to get too excited, and the enormous front skid plate is there for when the suspension travel runs out and the truck's belly slaps a mogul.

The Mounds' tight confines are, frankly, more suited for mid-sizers like the Tacoma, but it would be impressed by big bother.

My friend Scott, who bleeds Ford blue, was impressed, too. Walking around the TRD Pro, he liked the menacing, black front grille and hood scoops (OK, so the scoops are fake). The big back seat room. The lifted suspension.

"No running boards for better off-road clearance. Nice."

The TRD Pro trim is key to giving the Tundra personality. It's also key to keeping the Tundra relevant in the full-size truck market.

The Texas-built Tundra sits on old bones. In today's high-tech truck world of big Ram screens and digital Ford F-150s, the interior of the Tundra is a generation behind. The instrument display is simple. The chassis competent. The 8-inch console touchscreen devoid of fancy graphics or wireless Apple CarPlay.

On the road back down I-75 to Metro Detroit from The Mounds, the rear end fluttered over road seams. Inside, the cabin lacks the noise insulation of today's more refined Detroit trucks. But in its simplicity, truck lovers will find comfort.

The Tundra's tried-and-true design helped it win JD Power's 2020 initial quality award for light-duty trucks. Its standard V-8 guarantees 9,800-pound towing capability should you want to tow a boat instead of dirt bikes. Standard, too, is adaptive cruise control for long interstate trips.

Competitors offer cool stuff like digital screens and console work surfaces, but TRD Pro's basics keep its price in the mid-$55,000 range where comparably equipped, off-road-trimmed rivals like the wicked-looking Ram 1500 Rebel (be still, my beating heart) and Ford F-150 FX4 will crest 60 grand.

With the money you save you can go out and buy even bigger tires to pull little brother Taco out of the Mounds bog.

**NUTS & BOLTS**

### 2021 Toyota Tundra TRD Pro

- **Vehicle type**: Front engine, four-wheel-drive, 5-passenger pickup
- **Price**: $54,645 including 1,595 destination fee ($55,224 as tested)
- **Powerplant**: 5.7-liter V-8
- **Power**: 381 horsepower, 401 pound-feet torque
- **Transmission**: 6-speed automatic
- **Performance**: 0-60 mph, 6.4 seconds (Car and Driver); towing capacity, 9,800 pounds
- **Weight**: 5,998 pounds
- **Fuel economy**: EPA 13 city/17 highway/14 combined
- **Report card**
- **Highs**: Aggressive looks; big interior room
- **Lows**: Dated interior; rough ride
- **Overall**: 3 stars

# Pandemic car care

**Q: During the past year, we have driven only once a week to our grocery store, five miles away. One person thinks it would be good for the 2011 Ford Escape to go onto the freeway occasionally, up to speed for a few miles. The other person thinks this is unnecessary because on these cold nights he puts the battery charger on the night before. What do you think?**

**—M.P., Minneapolis**

**A:** Although driving the vehicle occasionally is not necessary, I still do it just to get a change of scenery on a sunny day. I consider three car lengths adequate for social distancing and I am helping the economy by spending money … on gas.

**Q: Ford Recall 19S54/NHTSA 19V-904 was opened for my 2008 Ford Fusion's ABS hydraulic brake (HCU valve) problem. I originally received a letter in January 2020 stating that parts should be available late in the first quarter of 2020, another in October 2020 stating parts should be available late in the first quarter of 2021. On December 30, 2020, my wife tried to brake at a stop light during normal traffic but wet conditions. The brake pedal went down to the floor, but did not immediately stop the car, causing the car to swerve. My mechanic also experienced this same problem but could not repair it without the proper part from Ford. I opened a trouble case with Ford Motor Company and a complaint number with the NHTSA. I also took the car to a local Ford dealership for diagnosis. The dealership said they could diagnose the for $150 but could not fix it until parts are available. In the recall letter, Ford states that: "If the HCU valve is stuck open, this may result in extended brake pedal travel required to stop the vehicle, increasing the risk of a crash. Ford has not issued instructions to stop driving the vehicle under the safety recall." The car is currently being garage kept. Your thoughts and/or suggestions?**

**—J.L. Mokena, Illinois**

**A:** Don't drive in inclement weather. I apologize for the glib answer, but the advice is good. We have grown to rely on the ABS system to improve safe braking in poor road conditions. As you know, the system "pumps" the brakes giving the driver better control to steer out of danger. Whenever the roads are clear, the ABS system just waits in the background and the regular brakes usually work normally. There is not much I can add to your endeavors to get the car fixed.

**Q: We are very satisfied owners of a 2021 Subaru Ascent with 3,300 miles on it. It has the 2.4-liter turbo boxer engine. We plan to use it to tow a single axle, 3,300-pound travel trailer. We have just learned from a friend who owned a 2019 Ascent with the same engine that he had to trade his due to his dealer being unable to solve an oil dilution issue – apparently occurring infrequently in not only some Subaru turbo vehicles. Any thoughts you could share with us on the overall safety of our vehicle? Any "symptoms" we should be watching for?**

**—S.D., Lombard, Illinois**

**A:** The oil gets diluted with gasoline which reduces its lubricating ability. The quickest way to diagnose the problem is to pull the dipstick. If the level is above the full line, or has a gasoline odor, there is a problem. Simply check the oil at every fill-up.

## MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

*Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.*

# Life & Style

# Belgium shows restored masterpiece but stolen panel rankles

By RAF CASERT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**GHENT, Belgium** (AP)—Look closely, and one panel of the brilliantly restored lower half of the Ghent Altarpiece still has old varnish, right next to the vivid coloring that has come to life again in one of the most iconic works of Western art.

It seems older than the rest of the early 15th Century work, but in fact the browner panel is a copy dating to the 1940s—and a reminder of one of the greatest unsolved art crimes of all time: The 1934 theft of the Just Judges panel, painted by the Flemish Primitive Jan Van Eyck, whose works grace the world's greatest museums.

Restorers didn't want to give the copy the same makeover as other panels that have been cleaned up so far.

"We chose to leave that patina on, precisely to show clearly to the people that this is a copy, not the real Van Eyck," Canon Ludo Collin of Ghent's Saint Bavo's Cathedral said ahead of the opening of a new visitor center this weekend .

The real Just Judges could be anywhere, and Ghent still has a prosecutor and two police investigators tasked with solving the crime almost a century later. And over the years they have had the assistance—usually unsolicited—of amateur sleuths ranging from a former police commissioner to a cab driver, a computer expert and a children's book author.

Like the painting itself with its intricate detail, glowing light and religious subtleties, the crime story is hard to resist.

Magistrate Caroline Dewitte says that just before the chief suspect, Arsene Goedertier, died of a stroke half a year after the theft, he murmured: "Only I know where the panel is." And then there's the mysterious claim in the last of 14 extortion letters, one never sent, in which Goedertier wrote that "The Just Judges are in a place where neither I nor anyone else can take it without attracting the public's attention."

AP

A man views the panels of the Ghent Altarpiece, by Flemish painter Jan Van Eyck, at Saint Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium on Monday, March 22, 2021.

Adding to the mystery, police searching Goedertier's office found a series of so-far indecipherable drawings and strange acronyms that could possibly be linked to the theft. "It has shades of The Da Vinci Code," Dewitte said.

In its long history, the Ghent Altarpiece was nearly destroyed by iconoclasts in the 16th century, taken to Paris by horse and carriage after the French revolution, sold off to an art dealer, almost burned in the cathedral in 1822 and bricked in during World War I to avoid German appropriation.

After the Just Judges survived all that, then came what was quickly dubbed "the intrepid theft."

The disappearance was discovered on the morning of April 11, 1934, and soon afterward throngs flooded into the Gothic cathedral, potentially destroying key evidence that could have helped investigators.

"Just think what might have been lost in those first precious hours," Dewitte said.

Then the first letter arrived at the Ghent bishopric, demanding 1 million francs, a vast sum at the time, for the panel's safe return, and threatening to destroy the work if authorities didn't cooperate. The extortionist even gave back a minor rear panel that had also disappeared that night, to prove his credentials. Twelve more such letters followed and the 14th was found, unposted.

"It's a case that makes people fantasize," said Paul Drossens, the state archivist who now has the original police dossier in his care. In three big files, marked in red with "Never destroy," it contains everything from the letters, the appeal to Scotland Yard for help and the 1935 public warning that "the prosecutor's office is convinced that (the) panel was not destroyed and needs to be tracked down in the country, and primarily in Ghent and its environs."

It never was.

Ever since the massive restoration effort on the 15-by-11-foot altarpiece started in 2012—stripping layers of old varnish and overpainting to reveal Van Eyck's brushwork—Dewitte said, "I was somehow hoping that it would lead to a breakthrough, because it is so sad that the original panel could not be part of it. It was not to be."

Canon Collin still holds out some hope for what he lovingly calls "the Loch Ness Monster of our cathedral," as it's been suggested that the panel might have been hidden somewhere inside the massive Gothic building.

In any case, authorities now want to ensure that all the remaining panels are perfectly protected from theft and humidity. If there is any drawback to the new visitor center, it is the massive glass encasement that keeps the public just too far away for a close inspection of one of Europe's greatest works of art.

## Live long in sculpture: 20-foot art planned for Spock symbol

**BOSTON** (AP)—The Museum of Science in Boston is paying tribute to city native Leonard Nimoy with a 20-foot sculpture shaped like Mr. Spock's split-fingered "live long and prosper" hand gesture, the museum and the late "Star Trek" actor's family announced Friday.

The stainless steel monument, designed by artist David Phillips, will be placed in front of the museum. The announcement was made on the same day former Mayor Marty Walsh proclaimed Leonard Nimoy Day in the city.

"The 'live long and prosper' symbol represents a message that my dad believed so strongly in," his daughter, Julie Nimoy, said in a statement. "My dad always loved Boston and he would be honored knowing that the Museum of Science would be the permanent home to this memorial. The sculpture not only depicts one of the world's most recognized and loved gestures for peace, tolerance, and diversity, but it will also be a beautiful tribute to my dad's life and legacy."

Nimoy, born in the West End just blocks from the museum, had a 60-year Hollywood career as an actor, director, producer, writer, recording artist and photographer. He died in 2015 at age 83.

The idea for the half-human, half-Vulcan's hand gesture originated from Nimoy himself, who was inspired by an ancient blessing he saw in his synagogue as a youth, the museum said.

"He lifted our aspirations and hopes through his commitment to science, intellectual curiosity, generosity, and, yes, logic," museum President Tim Ritche said in a statement. "He reminded us about the best part of humanity and gave us a vision for building a society based on reason and tolerance."

Finalization of the site plan, fundraising and construction is underway.

## Best friend calls the police after man threatens suicide

DEAR ABBY: I am a woman in my late 30s. "Tim" and I have been best friends for more than 10 years. Over the last few years, he has struggled with depression and addiction, and I have done my best to help him.

A few weeks back, Tim called me crying and said he was planning to end his life. It wasn't the first time he has spoken this way, but it was the first time he described a plan of action. Because I was alarmed, I called the police to do a welfare check. They went to Tim's home, which is across the country from mine, and took him to a psychiatric facility for several days. Now that he's out, he's furious with me for notifying the police and says I betrayed him. He said he doesn't know if we can continue to be friends.

I feel terrible, like I perhaps made a mistake by calling reinforcements, but I was more worried about the consequences of not calling. My family is telling me I should step away from the friendship altogether, but I can't imagine doing that. Please help.

TAKES FRIENDSHIP SERIOUSLY

**DEAR TAKES: Your family's advice to step away seems sensible. You did NOT make a mistake by calling to see that Tim got help after he told you he had a plan in place to take his own life. You were trying to help him and prevent a tragedy, and that's a good thing.**

**Tim is clearly very ill and, unfortunately, there is little you can do to fix what's wrong with him (which is plenty). If you know his family, inform them about what has been going on. And because he doesn't know if he can continue being friends with you, leave it up to him to decide.**

**DEAR ABBY:** My brother's wife is pregnant, and there is talk about their moving to the state where her family lives. There are only three people in my sister-in-law's family (one is elderly and two others work full time) who may provide her with support during her transition into motherhood. On the other hand, there are 10 of us who could help them emotionally and physically if they stay here.

My sister-in-law plans on being a stay-at-home mom, which I wholeheartedly support. My brother would move to the state where her family resides only in order to appease her. Our family is closer than her family. I feel we can provide them with more love and support than her family. What can I say or do to show them that living near our family is the best decision?

NEAR IS BETTER

**DEAR NEAR: I'm sure you mean well, but do not make the mistake of trying to "sell" your sister-in-law on staying. It appears her mind is made up. If she feels she would be more comfortable with her own family as she approaches this milestone, not much you can say will dissuade her. Of course, nothing prevents you from telling your brother how you feel, if you haven't already.**

**You might also suggest they consider renting for a year rather than buying a home right away, to see how they like it. That way, once the baby arrives and reality hits, she may realize she won't have the support she may need, and they may decide to return.**

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

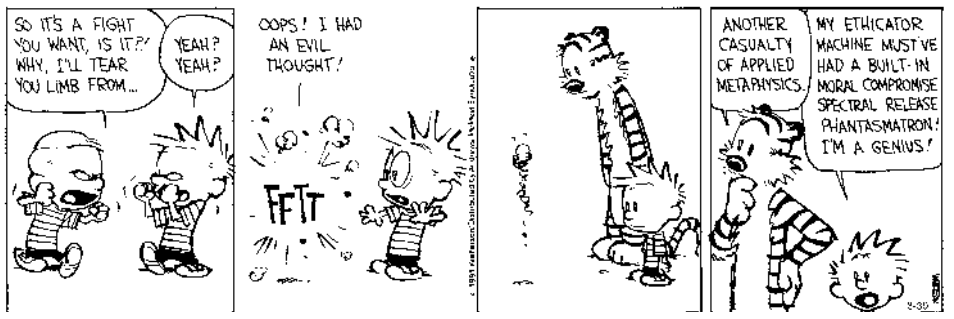
*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

*To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.*

# Pastimes

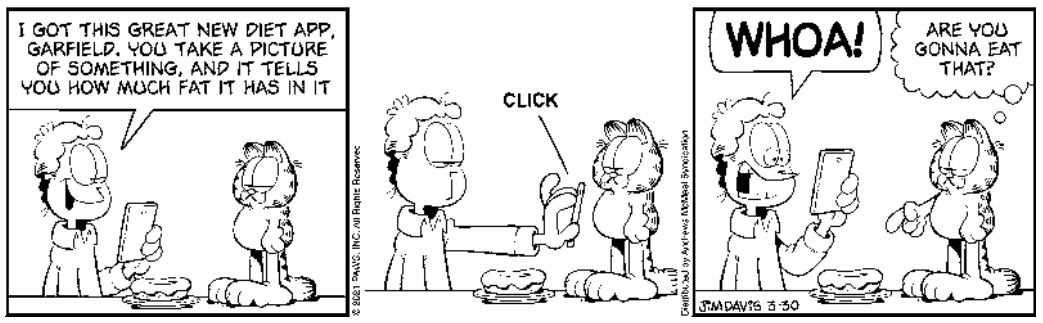
## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


SO IT'S A FIGHT YOU WANT, IS IT?! WHY, I'LL TEAR YOU LIMB FROM...
YEAH? YEAH?
OOPS! I HAD AN EVIL THOUGHT!
FFTT
ANOTHER CASUALTY OF APPLIED METAPHYSICS.
MY ETHICATOR MACHINE MUST'VE HAD A BUILT-IN MORAL COMPROMISE SPECTRAL RELEASE PHANTASMATRON! I'M A GENIUS!

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis


I GOT THIS GREAT NEW DIET APP, GARFIELD. YOU TAKE A PICTURE OF SOMETHING, AND IT TELLS YOU HOW MUCH FAT IT HAS IN IT
CLICK
WHOA!
ARE YOU GONNA EAT THAT?

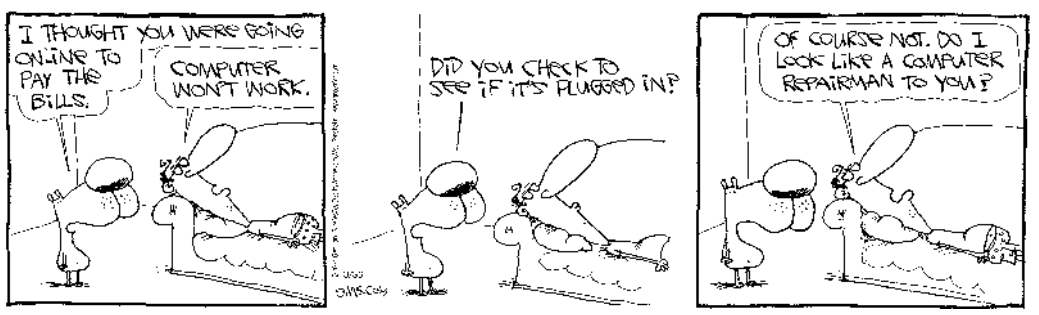
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

DAD, I NEED TO WORK ON MY FOOTBALL THROWING.
YOU WANNA TOSS AROUND THE OL' PIGSKIN?
CHUCK THE OL' INFLATED OVAL?
SIGH.
COME ON! I'LL GRAB THE OL' LEATHER WATERMELON!

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING ONLINE TO PAY THE BILLS.
COMPUTER WON'T WORK.
DID YOU CHECK TO SEE IF IT'S PLUGGED IN?
OF COURSE NOT. DO I LOOK LIKE A COMPUTER REPAIRMAN TO YOU?

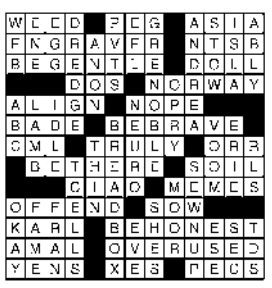
## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

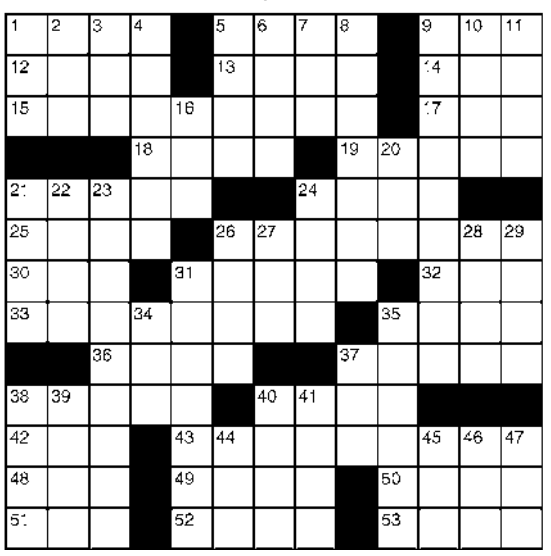
**ACROSS**
1 Relaxed
5 Hurt severely
9 Needlefish
12 Singer Paul
13 Big name in scat
14 Shock partner
15 Profit-generating pro
17 — Kippur
18 Coffee-growing region of Hawaii
19 Make a comeback
21 Confused
24 Jekyll's bad side
25 Low-calorie
26 Refrigerator feature
30 Wanted poster abbr.
31 Napper's noise
32 Equi-
33 Hairpiece creator
35 Pesky insect
36 Jittery
37 Quarrel
38 Soccer star from Argentina
40 Appease
42 Have bills
43 Name in the headlines
48 Ran into
49 Now, in a memo
50 Missile shelter
51 Sound from a hot wok
52 Victories
53 Grand tale

**DOWN**
1 Listener
2 Literary collection
3 Enjoy Aspen
4 Northerner
5 Intend
6 — -Seltzer
7 Land in la mer
8 Brief proposal?
9 Journalist and co-host of "CBS This Morning"
10 MP's quarry
11 "Ratatouille" rat
16 Extinct bird
20 Nabokov novel
21 "There oughta be —!"
22 "Kon- —"
23 Theater backdrops
24 German mister
26 Jet-black
27 Iowa college
28 Jacob's twin
29 Memory method
31 City north of Flint, Michigan
34 Rx writers
35 "Summer Nights" musical
37 $ dispenser
38 May honorees
39 Rams fans?
40 Graceful bird
41 Nile vipers
44 "Washington Black" author — Edugyan
45 Half a ton
46 Ex-quarterback Manning
47 Sinbad's bird

**Solution time: 22 mins.**



**Yesterday's answer 3-30**



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Katy Mixon, 40; Celine Dion, 53; MC Hammer, 59; Eric Clapton, 76.

**Happy Birthday:** Assess your relationships and set boundaries where necessary. Concentrate on how to utilize your skills to enhance your life and relationships with those who bring out the best in you. Recognize what you can do, and don't waste time arguing over petty grievances when you can channel your energy into building a stable, satisfying future. Take control and excel. Your numbers are 2, 15, 24, 27, 36, 41, 44.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Question everything that doesn't feel right. Don't put up with situations that stop you from doing what's best for you. Don't complain; look for solutions that will lead to a better environment. Take control, and you'll have no regrets. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Make decisions based on facts. Question anyone who doesn't appear to have a plan. Use your ingenuity, physical ability and determination to overcome any obstacle you face. Handle your finances cautiously, and refuse to let emotions trigger indulgent behavior. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Hard work will lead to an excellent opportunity. Refuse to let someone step in and take over. Follow your plans, and you'll be the one to reap the rewards. Distance yourself from anyone who is unstable, misleading or intrusive. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Choose to follow your intuition when it comes to working and dealing with situations that may affect your health and well-being. Make moves based on common sense, and show discipline when faced with temptation. Choose to liberate yourself from being a follower. ✪✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take a moment to rethink your next move. Don't act under emotional duress. Filter what's happening and being said, then make a move that offers sound suggestions. Personal improvement will lift your spirits and encourage a healthier lifestyle. ✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* A change someone makes will tempt you to head in the same direction. Consider what will happen if you don't choose to follow your dreams. Do what's best for you, and you'll breathe easy at the end of the day. ✪✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Consider every angle. Make sure you have the necessary knowledge, technology and money to finish what you start. Preparation will be the key to getting ahead. Take physical action. Put everything in its place before you commit time, money and effort. ✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll be up and down if you let someone dictate what you can do or say. Speak up, make yourself clear and follow your heart. You have plenty to offer, and you can make a difference. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Consider how to get ahead or move forward financially. Don't rely on someone to do your bidding for you. Stick to what you know and do best, and build your confidence by investing in your future. ✪✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't lose sight of your goals and objectives. Take better care of your health and your relationships with friends and relatives. Keeping the peace will put you in a better position to barter. Be intelligent when handling money matters. ✪✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't spend impulsively. Consider your overhead before you bu something you don't need. Personal improvements don't have to cost money. Start with a physical fitness routine and proper diet that you can do in the comfort of your own home. ✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You'll have plenty of ideas, but not all will be financially sound. Do your best to make a difference. Improve your life and the lives of loved ones. Avoid getting into an argument with someone who will never see things your way. ✪✪✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are adaptable, conscientious and determined. You are resourceful and ambitious. ✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 7 | 5 | 3 | | 4 | | |
| | 4 | | | 2 | | 1 | | 5 |
| | | | | | | | 6 | |
| 2 | | | 8 | | | | | 6 |
| 6 | 5 | | | | | | 8 | 1 |
| 1 | | | | | 6 | | | 3 |
| | 2 | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | 9 | | 4 | | | 5 | |
| | 7 | | 2 | 1 | 5 | | | |

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| 6 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 8 |
| 9 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| 7 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 5 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 2 |

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

**IT'S BEEN CANCELED** Solution: 6 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | T | M | L | E | C | T | U | R | E | C | L | A | S | S |
| N | N | E | C | I | V | R | E | S | E | V | E | N | T | D |
| E | E | E | L | S | N | N | E | C | E | C | T | R | H | A |
| M | M | T | M | E | T | T | A | U | A | S | O | R | G | O |
| T | E | I | I | A | P | R | E | M | N | P | U | E | I | L |
| N | E | N | L | C | N | H | P | R | S | I | L | B | L | P |
| I | R | G | S | I | K | R | O | A | N | C | O | A | F | U |
| O | G | B | V | S | T | E | U | N | Y | E | H | N | Y | V |
| P | A | A | A | D | A | R | T | O | E | M | T | O | A | R |
| P | L | R | A | N | I | M | E | S | T | D | E | C | O | E |
| A | O | R | E | L | D | N | H | C | P | L | A | N | S | L |
| R | G | L | E | A | U | O | N | A | N | T | M | T | T | B |
| A | I | A | I | D | W | N | R | E | I | O | S | E | E | A |
| D | S | S | M | C | R | T | C | O | R | K | C | E | H | C |
| E | S | A | L | E | Y | O | N | H | O | L | I | D | A | Y |

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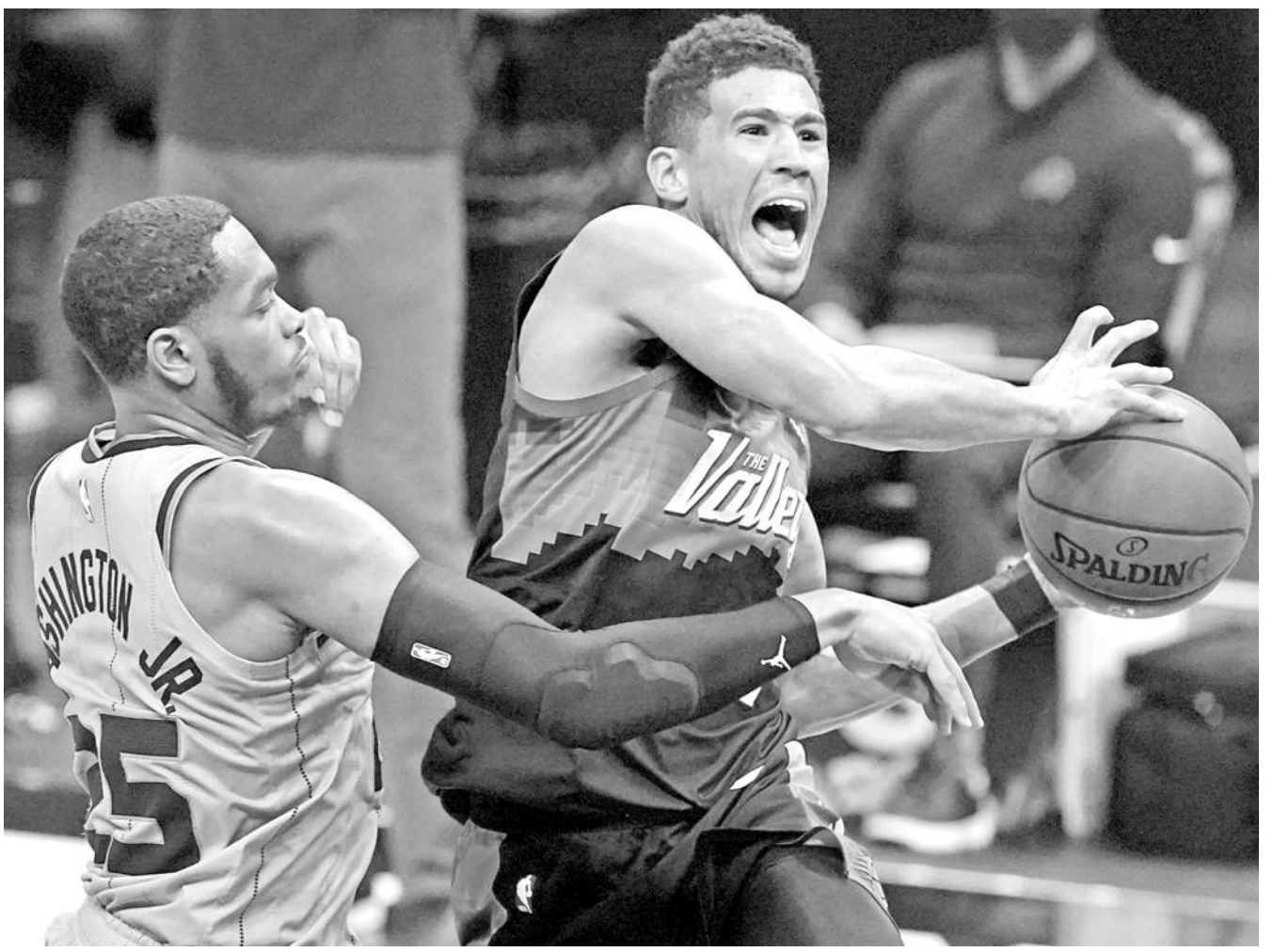
Agreement, Appointment, Area, Band, Buses, Cable, Camp, Carnival, Check, Class, Concert, Date, Dinner, Event, Flight, Game, Holiday, Internet, Lease, Lecture, Lunch, Mass, Meeting, Order, Parade, Party, Payment, Plans, Play, Policy, Rental, Reunion, Sale, School, Seminar, Service, Show, Sports, Teams, Telephone, Tickets, Tournament, Trip, Uploads, Vacation

**Yesterday's Answer: Suspenders**

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 45 through 62** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

# Booker scores 35 points, Suns outlast Hornets in OT



AP
Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker, right, is fouled by Charlotte Hornets forward P.J. Washington during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Sunday, March 28, 2021, in Charlotte, N.C.

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** (AP)—Devin Booker scored 35 points, Chris Paul had 16 and the Phoenix Suns outlasted the Charlotte Hornets 101-97 in overtime Sunday.

Deandre Ayton added 14 points, and Mikal Bridges had 13 points, eight rebounds and a career-high six steals. The Suns, second in the Western Conference at 31-14, won three of four on their Southeast swing.

"I think both teams wish they made more shots, but there are some games like that," Booker said. "It was a real high-intensity game and we had our chance to make an all right trip into a good trip and we did that."

Devonte Graham led the Hornets with 30 points, and Terry Rozier had 22 points and 10 rebounds. Miles Bridges added 18 points, 12 rebounds, and Gordon Hayward scored 15 points.

"Defensively, (Mikal Bridges') contests are some of the best in the league at his position after a screen," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "He has the length and ability to stay in a play. Graham got going and we needed somebody to get their hand up and make it tough on him and that is what Mikal does. He has knack for making plays."

A crowd of 3,850 saw the Hornets force overtime, with Rozier's 3-pointer tying it at 90 with 33.5 seconds left.

"That's the second-best team in the West, playing as well as anybody in the NBA, and we just held them to 35% shooting, 14 points in the fourth quarter, and we were one bucket away from winning this game," Hornets coach James Borrego said. "A lot of it was on the defensive end. I like where our defense is. It's got to carry us every night."

Phoenix opened the second half on an 11-0 run. A 3-pointer by Hayward was Charlotte's first field goal in the half, at 6:20.

"It's (about) staying poised," said Mikal Bridges, whose team has the NBA's best road record at 16-6. "Going on the road and playing just for us – you got some crowd there, but it's usually just us. It's that road attitude. I feel like playing on the road is a lot more fun because you know everybody is going against you."

### Lakers 96, Magic 93

In Los Angeles, Dennis Schroder scored 24 points, Kyle Kuzma added 21 and Los Angeles Lakers rallied to beat Orlando.

Montrezl Harrell had 18 points to help Los Angeles win two in a row without LeBron James and Anthony Davis.

Orlando's Otto Porter Jr. had a clean look at a 3-pointer to send it to overtime, but the shot hit the rim.

Dwayne Bacon led the Magic with 26 points. They have dropped 13 of 15.

### Nuggets 126, Hawks 102

In Denver, Aaron Gordon scored 13 points in his Denver debut to help the Nuggets beat Atlanta.

Acquired from Orlando at the trade deadline, Gordon started and played 21 minutes. Nikola Jokic added with 16 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, and Michael Porter Jr. had 15 points and 10 rebounds.

Trae Young scored 21 points for Atlanta. The Hawks lost for the third time in 12 games.

### Trail Blazers 122, Raptors 1117

In Tampa, Fla., CJ McCollum scored seven of his 23 points in the final two minutes, Damian Lillard had 22 points and 11 assists, and Portland beat Toronto.

Pascal Siakam had 26 points and eight rebounds, and Fred VanVleet added 20 points and eight assists for Toronto, The Raptors lost for the 11th time in 12 games.

The game was played three days after the trade deadline move in which the Raptors sent Norman Powell to the Blazers for Gary Trent Jr. and Rodney Hood.

## Florida big man Castleton enters NBA draft for feedback

**GAINESVILLE, Fla.** (AP)—Florida big man Colin Castleton entered his name in the NBA draft Sunday in hopes of "receiving feedback that will help my dreams come true."

The 6-foot-11 forward said he will not hire an agent and will retain his college eligibility. The junior averaged 12.4 points, 6.4 rebounds and 2.2 blocks a game. His average swats rank as the fifth-best single-season mark in school history.

Castleton, who transferred to Florida after spending two years buried on Michigan's bench, was at his best in the NCAA Tournament. He had 19 points and 14 rebounds in a win against Virginia Tech and 14 points and 10 boards in a loss to Oral Roberts. He had three blocks in each game. If he does end up leaving Florida, his departure would create an even bigger hole for coach Mike White.

Point guard Tre Mann turned pro earlier in the week and plans to hire an agent. Shooting guard Noah Locke, who started 51 of the team's last 51 games, backup guard Ques Glover and reserve forward Osayi Osifo entered the transfer portal and plan to continue their careers elsewhere.

Florida could have more losses ahead. The Gators await word on guard Scottie Lewis and forward Keyontae Johnson. Lewis could test the NBA waters or transfer, and there's been no indication that Johnson will be cleared to play again at Florida. He was hospitalized after collapsing during a game in early December and ruled out for the season. The cause of his collapse has yet to be revealed.

## Lakers add center Andre Drummond for postseason push

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Andre Drummond is joining the Los Angeles Lakers for the playoff push.

The Lakers announced the signing of the two-time All-Star center less than an hour before Sunday night's game against the Orlando Magic. Drummond announced his decision with a post on his Instagram account earlier in the day, writing "Back to work" underneath an illustration of himself in a Lakers uniform.

Drummond agreed to a buyout Friday from the Cleveland Cavaliers, who acquired the four-time NBA rebounding champion last year after nearly eight seasons in Detroit. He had to clear waivers before he could join a team of his choosing, and Drummond chose to link up with LeBron James, Anthony Davis and the defending NBA champions.

"We're all thrilled. He's one of the best centers in the league and someone every defensive coordinator is going to have to account for while trying to slow down LeBron, AD and our guards when we get going," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said after Sunday's 96-93 victory over the Magic. "He can dominate on both sides and his physicality is something they have to account for."

Vogel said he wasn't sure if Drummond would be available for the Lakers' next game, which is Wednesday against the Milwaukee Bucks.

Drummond is almost certain to get his first significant NBA postseason playing time with the Lakers after appearing in only eight playoff games — and losing all eight — in two postseason trips with the Pistons.

When Drummond gets up to playing speed after sitting out the past six weeks, the two-time All-Star Game selection should be a notable upgrade at center for Los Angeles, which won a competition with several contenders for his services over the weekend.

Veteran Marc Gasol played inconsistently for the Lakers even before he returned recently from a 3 1/2-week bout with coronavirus, while 6-foot-8 Montrezl Harrell is undersized for the biggest defensive assignments in the middle.

"I really believe we are going to need all three of those guys and we will use all three of them with the condensed schedule and the playoffs coming up," Vogel said.

Harrell knows Drummond is eager to play, especially after his long layoff, but hasn't considered the lineup implications.

"Everything comes from the top office and coaching staff. I am going to keep playing the way I can play," he said. We got a great player who is going to help our team and organization."

Davis also plays center in many postseason matchups, but Drummond's rebounding and interior scoring should immediately boost the Lakers as they attempt to hang on to a top seed in the Western Conference without James and Davis. James is out indefinitely with a sprained right ankle, while Davis hasn't played since Feb. 14 due to a right calf injury.

Drummond is averaging 17.5 points, 13.5 rebounds and 2.5 assists in 25 starts for the Cavs this season. He hasn't played since Feb. 12, when Cleveland benched him to give more playing time to youngster Jarrett Allen.

Drummond would be second in the league in rebounds per game to Atlanta's Clint Capela if he had played enough games to qualify among the league leaders. His 4.0 offensive rebounds per game would be third in the NBA.

The Lakers currently rank ninth in the NBA in rebounds per game (45.1), but just 17th in offensive rebounds (9.6).

The 17-time champion franchise hasn't had a rebounder of Drummond's accomplishments for decades. The last Lakers player to top Drummond's career average of 13.8 rebounds per game in even one single season was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1975-76, and Los Angeles has had just one league rebounding champ in those ensuing 45 years: Dwight Howard in 2012-13.

"So much of the playoffs are about the paint, you know, and he's a physical force down there," Orlando coach Steve Clifford said about Drummond. "He's a great rim protector and one of the great offensive rebounders in our game. He could win one or two playoff games for you just for this physicality and size alone."

Drummond's arrival in LA is the latest development in the NBA's annual super-team agglomerations around the trade deadline. Brooklyn added Blake Griffin and LaMarcus Aldridge this month, while Miami got Victor Oladipo and Denver landed Aaron Gordon and JaVale McGee.

# Unbeaten Zags keep rolling with 83-65 rout of Creighton

**INDIANAPOLIS** (AP)— Gonzaga guard Andrew Nembhard believes he still has room to improve.

The scary part is, he thinks that also might be true for the undefeated Bulldogs.

Nembhard had 17 points and eight assists, both season highs, to keep the NCAA Tournament's top overall seed rolling Sunday with a 83-65 rout of fifth-seeded Creighton in the West Region semifinals. Afterward, he insisted nobody was satisfied.

"I don't think we have peaked," he said. "I think, as I said earlier, we can always get better. We can always work on our stuff. So I think we're getting close, and we need to squeeze out that five percent that we talked about."

It's hard to imagine the Bulldogs (29-0) could play much better.

They extended their school-record winning streak to 33, the Division I record for consecutive double-digit wins to 26 and reached the Elite Eight for the fourth time in six years. Next up is Tuesday's West regional final against sixth-seeded Southern California, an 82-68 winner over seventh-seeded Oregon.

Some of Gonzaga's usual stars were content with supporting roles Sunday.

AP

Gonzaga forward Drew Timme waves to fans after beating Creighton 83-65 in a Sweet 16 game in the NCAA men's college basketball tournament at Hinkle Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, Sunday, March 28, 2021.

Second-team All-American Drew Timme led the way with 22 points, six rebounds and four assists as the Zags shot 59.6% from the field against a foe that led the Big East in defensive field goal percentage. Joel Ayayi added 13 points and eight rebounds.

First-team All-American Corey Kispert scored 12 points and Timme's fellow second-teamer Jalen Suggs finished with nine.

Defensively, the Zags held Creighton to 40 points over the final 30 minutes as they methodically turned a 27-25 game into a blowout. Gonzaga never trailed, led 43-33 at halftime and spent most of the second half pulling away.

The Bluejays (22-9) never really had a serious chance at advancing to the Elite Eight for the first time since 1941, when the NCAA Tournament only gave out eight bids.

"They just play so fast, so efficient with everything they do," said Marcus Zegarowski, who led Creighton with 19 points. "There are no lapses. You just can't take, not even a play, you can't take a second off or they're going to make you pay."

Denzel Mahoney added 13 points for Creighton.

Gonzaga extended its advantage to 20 points on Suggs' layup with 11:22 to go. That just about finished off Creighton as the Zags moved within three wins of becoming the first undefeated national champion since Indiana in 1976.

"I'm just telling you: We're not hung up on the undefeated thing at all," coach Mark Few said. "We've got to go undefeated from here on out. We've got to go 3-0 if we want to win the championship, which that's been our goal all along. But nobody's talking about the overall undefeated thing at all."

### USC 82, Oregon 68

Isaiah White scored 22 points and Southern California shut down Oregon's potent offense to reach the Elite Eight for the first time in 20 years.

The Trojans (25-7) clipped the high-flying Ducks with their length on the perimeter and 7-footer Evan Mobley in the middle. Offensively, the region's No. 6 seed bobbed and weaved through the holes in Oregon's defense, shooting 57% and 10 of 17 from 3.

The all-around domination put three Pac-12 teams in the Elite Eight for the first time since 2001.

Eugene Omoruyi had 28 points 10 rebounds, and Chris Duarte scored 21 for the seventh-seeded Ducks (21-7). The Pac-12′s best 3-point shooting team (38%) went 5 of 21 from the arc.

### EAST
### Michigan 76, Florida State 58

Hunter Dickinson scored 14 points and top-seeded Michigan took the inside route to the Elite Eight, pounding away in the paint to take down surprisingly helpless Florida State.

Franz Wagner had 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Wolverines, who scored their first 30 points of the second half from close range to lead coach Juwan Howard and Co. to a victory in the only "chalk" meeting between a 1 and 4 seed of the second weekend.

Michigan (23-4) moved to a regional final for the first time since 2018. The Wolverines will play UCLA for a spot in the Final Four.

Badly off target most of the night, Florida State (18-7) didn't eclipse the 20-point mark until M.J. Walker (10 points) hit a jumper with 27 seconds left in the first half. Malik Osborne led the Seminoles with 12 points.

### UCLA 88, Alabama 78

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 17 points, hitting two big jumpers early in overtime, and No. 11 seed UCLA held on after Alabama's Alex Reese drained a buzzer-beating 3-pointer at the end of regulation to beat the second-seeded Crimson Tide.

After beating Michigan State in overtime just to escape the First Four, the unheralded Bruins (21-9) are headed to the Elite Eight for the first time since 2008.

UCLA thought it had the game won in regulation when Cody Riley's lay-in made it 63-62 with 14 seconds left, and Herbert Jones—a 75% foul shooter for Alabama—missed both of his attempts with 6 seconds left.

David Singleton was fouled and made two free throws for UCLA, pushing the lead to 65-62 with 4 seconds to go. But that still gave the Crimson Tide enough time to find Reese, whose tying 3-pointer splashed just before the buzzer.

Jules Bernard also scored 17 points, Singleton had 15 and Johnny Juzang and Tyger Campbell added 13 apiece as the Bruins gave coach Mick Cronin his first trip to a regional semifinal in 18 years as a college head coach.

Jahvon Quinerly scored 20 points and John Petty Jr. had 16 for the Crimson Tide (26-7), who have lost eight of their nine games in the Sweet 16.

## 5150 Taga Triathlon now accepting registrations

The Paupau 5150 Taga Triathlon, an Olympic-distance triathlon that aims to raise funds in preparation of the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, is now accepting registration for the May 29 event.

The event, set to raise funds to prepare CNMI triathletes as well as help in hosting the triathlon/aquathlon event for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, will be held at Paupau Beach and will feature a 1.5-kilometer swim out and back, a 40-km bike from Paupau to Seafix and back and then from Banzai back to PauPau, and a 10-km run from Paupau to Banzai and back.

Interested participants can register in categories including individual male, individual female, and team relay men/women/mixed.

The event will be held on May 29 beginning 6am.

The Top 3 finishers with receive cash prizes while the top overall for each age group will receive medals. Everyone who conquers the course will earn finisher's T-shirt.

Registration fee includes T-shirt and entrance to the awarding banquet that will be held at Kensington Hotel. Registration fee will continue to increase as the event draws nearer.

Currently, registration is set at $50 for individual and $150 for team relay. Starting April 10, registration will be $60 for individuals and $180 for team relay. On May 10, registration will increase to $70 for individuals, and $210 for team relay and on May 26, registration will be officially closed.

Paupau 5150 Taga Triathlon is being organized by Triathlon Association of the CNMI. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

## TEAM

*From Page 20*

During the inaugural event, over 100 women came out to run the course and 40 of the women participating in the event composed the teams competing for the chance to choose the charity recipient for the prize money.

Northern Marianas Athletics wants to thank all event volunteers because without them the event could not have been possible.

Volunteers include Rep. Denita Kaipat Yangetmai (D-Saipan), who donated mwáárs to the top finishers; and Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan), who assembled all of the runners by blowing a conch horn, while Yvette Bennet and Lia Rangamar kicked off the race with the pounding sound of coconuts.

Runners prepare for kick off during the CNMI's first NMI 10K Women's Run last Saturday. KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Other volunteers include the Ach Chuuk CNMI Association and SIS Rotary Interact Club who were stationed along the course to cheer the runners on and provide water.

The Chuukese Women's Group were at the 13 Fisherman's Memorial and the SIS Rotary Interact Club was stationed at the 5K turn-around with signs supporting women created by Amie McRobert's grade 8 class.

NMA would also like to thank the volunteer race crew and the sponsors and donors MARPAC Home & Family, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Triple J Superfresh, MVA, Department of Public Safety, McDonald's of Saipan, Khaiceel's Savvy Bags, Irensia Studio, AXISS Photo, Inspire Micronesia, Run Saipan, and everyone else that donated in one way or another to this year's woman's run.

## LABAUSA

*From Page 20*

attempt at 62 kg. Ichiro finally got it right in the third round at 62 kg and finished with a total of 110 kg.

Also topping their respective categories were Zarinae Sapong and Danica Guevarra.

Sapong completed the tournament with her best snatch at 35 kg and her best clean and jerk at 49 kg totaling 84 kg, while Guevarra completed the tournament with her best snatch at 55 kg and her best clean and jerk at 70 kg totaling 125 kg.

# $5K worth of prizes at stake in 2021 Gold's Gym Challenge

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Patrick Tudela, Gold's Gym Saipan Overall Male Saipan and Overall Male International winner.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Reyel Mar Quezon, 3rd Place Men's 18- 29.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Michael Pabalan, 3rd Place Men's 30-49

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chutima Borja, 1st Place Female 30-49.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Venus Raguine, Overall Winner Female Saipan/3rd Place Winner Overall Female International.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Yanel Melo, 1st Place Female 18-29.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sheilane Seno, 1st Place Female 50+.

Gold's Gym Saipan, in partnership with PHI Pharmacy, Michelob Ultra, Brabu Pharmacy and Wellness Center, and TurnKey Solutions, will persevere and host the "2021 Gold's Gym Challenge."

Registration is open and the last day for sign-ups will be Saturday, April 3. Gold's Gym Saipan will choose their local winners who will be eligible for a prize pool featuring 20 cash prizes totaling $5,000. Winners will be chosen based on their transformation. Overall male and female winners, plus age group winners will be receiving cash and prizes. Gold's Gym general manager Tyce Mister shared, "I love the Challenge! Everyone who participates and puts in effort comes away a winner, even without winning a big prize! The goal is body transformation, but participants come away with so much more than that."

At Gold's Gym, the mission is to "Help people achieve their potential through fitness." The Gold's Gym Challenge has proven time and time again, that participants surprise even themselves with the changes made throughout their Challenge journey. Changes, not only with their body and fitness levels, but also with their development with discipline, willpower, and inner strength often making them a better person in their personal life, work life, and in our community.

For example, Patrick Tudela, 2020 Local Overall Male Challenge Winner and 1st Place Overall Male International Winner who lost 7.5 inches around the waist and 7% body fat while improving muscle tone, said "I am very happy that I was able to stay committed and consistent and see the journey all the way through until the end. But the end doesn't mean I'm done. I will continue on this path and see where I go on this fitness journey."

Venus Raguine, 2020 Local Overall Female Challenge Winner and 3rd place Overall Female International Winner, shared "There are several ways in which I have benefited in my life from exercising regularly, besides just making me stronger more than I thought. It has made me become more organized, helped me make better decisions, and motivated me to take on new challenges in life."

Gold's Gym International had postponed the 2021 Challenge until this Spring, but recently made the difficult decision to cancel it for this year due to the pandemic. However, a handful of Gold's Gyms around the world (outside of the U.S.) have decided to continue with their own Challenges. Gold's Gym Saipan will be one of those gyms.

Registration is now open. Gold's Gym Saipan has launched the 12-week fitness campaign that aims at changing lives in the Marianas. The Gold's Gym Challenge 2021 offers contestants an opportunity to exceed their fitness goals, transform themselves, and earn a chance to win cash prizes at the same time. It is not too late to join, as the last registration date is April 3. Registration is only $50. Participants must be a member of Gold's Gym Saipan. A Challenge promotion is available. Please stop by or call the Welcome Desk at (670) 233-4000 for more details.

These Challengers will be measured and photographed at the start of the 12-week program to establish a point of reference for their transformation. At the end of the challenge, contestants will be measured and photographed once again to document the results of their progress and to determine the winners of each category.

The Gold's Gym Challenge is open to any individual, age 18 or older, that lives in the CNMI. Aside from their sense of accomplishment, the top individuals will be awarded cash and promotional prizes. Gold's Gym Challenge has been an annual event since 2013. This serves to be a great opportunity for companies and organizations to promote health and fitness to their employees by encouraging them to join Gold's Gym Challenge and help support the competition.

The 2021 Gold's Gym Challenge benefits everyone involved and Gold's Gym would like to thank their partners for this special event that will impact the community in such a positive way: PHI Pharmacy, Michelob Ultra, Brabu Pharmacy and Wellness Center, and TurnKey Solutions. Stop by Gold's Gym and begin change today! In 12 weeks, you'll have the opportunity to transform your mind, body and soul. ***(PR)***

Booker scores 35 points, Suns outlast Hornets in OT

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Unbeaten Zags keep rolling with 83-65 rout of Creighton

PAGE 18

# Labausa prevails in weightlifting tourney

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Seasoned weightlifter Antonette T. Labausa came out on top in the women's division of last Saturday's Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Labausa, who has represented the CNMI in weightlifting on an international level, pushed herself to the limits and her efforts were not in vain as she topped the 76-kg category.

The 25-year-old dominated in the snatch, starting off with a good lift of 71 kg before moving on to her previous record best of 74 kg. As expected, Labausa triumphed and gained a round of applause from the crowd after breaking her own record when she crushed it in the 76 kg, logging it as her new personal best.

In the clean and jerk, Labausa breezed past 91 kg before succeeding at 94 kg, just 1 kg below her personal best. Unfortunately, Labausa failed in her attempt at 97 kg in the third and final round. She finished the tournament with a total of 170 kg.

"I thought I did pretty well overall. I snatched over my best and maybe just one kilogram under my best competition for clean and jerk. My best for competition clean and jerk was 95 and my best for snatch is now 76 but it was 74 before," she said.

Labausa said she feels she did pretty well despite how involved she was in the preparation of the event which took a lot from her training.

"I think that I did a lot better than I was expecting because I was helping with a lot of the moving, [preparation], and [I was also] training other people too so it's my first time doing a lot of things at once," she said.

Labausa, who competed in the 2020 Australia Open and has devoted much of her time in international weightlifting training, said her international experience really gave her the confidence she needed during last Saturday's competition.

"I think it just made me overall more confident. I'm tougher in a sense where my mindset is even though I'm tired, and even though I feel like you just can't do it, you still got to do it so I think it really just made me tougher mentally," she said.

Labausa conquered the only other woman in her weight category, Riella Ann B. Ichiro, who started off with 45 kg in the snatch before moving on to 48 kg before failing at her attempt at 51 kg.

For the clean and jerk, Ichiro struggled but prevailed at 58 kg before failing her first

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KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Antonette T. Labausa topped the women's division of last Saturday's Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

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All female competitors pose for a photo following the awarding of the Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe last Saturday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Team SIS Cares for Animals, from left, Anika Snyder, Tiana Cabrera, Sarka Glajchova, and Noriko Jim pose for a photo before winning the inaugural NMI 10K Womens Run last Saturday.

## Team SIS Cares for Animals takes inaugural title

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Team SIS Cares for Animals took the inaugural title during the CNMI's first NMI 10K Women's Run last Saturday and proceeds earned from the inaugural event will be donated to a charity of the team's choosing.

CNMI 10K record holder Noriko Jim, Šarka Glajchova, Tiana Cabrera, and Anika Snyder of Team SIS Cares for Animals took the first-place spot with a time of 2:27:3 followed by Team NMIFA B and Team Agape.

Team SIS Cares for Animals chose Saipan Cares for Animals as the recipient of the prize money this year as they struggle to fund their move to a new location.

Teams consisted of four runners and the Top 3 runners' times were added together to form a composite time with the lowest time taking the prize.

According to Robin Sapong, Oceania Athletics Association president, the winning team will personally award their local charity the money raised from the event in an awarding ceremony sometime in April.

The official amount will be determined by the end of the month but as of Saturday, Sapong said the Women's Run successfully raised $1,500.

"The event had an overwhelming turnout. We were thinking it wouldn't be a great turnout with what's going on in the community but it was better than expected and we were sold out at 102," he said.

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